

**Task Force to Help Shape the Next Generation of Maine Land Conservation**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**May 29, 2018**

**Task Force Members Present:** John Banks, Adam Bishop, Cathy Breen, John Bryant, Patrick Corey, Lee Dassler, Tim Glidden, Doug Kane, Dennis Keschl, Don Kleiner, Janet McMahon, Nancy Smith, Alison Sucey, Wolfe Tone, David Trahan, Chris Winstead

**Task Force Members Absent:** Jen Brophy, Hugh Cowperthwaite, Alex Koch, Austin Muir

**Others Present:** Jerry Bley (co-coordinator), Liz Petruska (co-coordinator)

**Public:** Tom Abello (TNC), Eliza Donoghue (Maine Audubon), Bob Myers (Maine Snowmobile Association), Jeff Romano (MCHT), Warren Whitney (MCHT),

The first meeting of the Task Force to Help Shape the Next Generation of Maine Land Conservation (Task Force) took place on Tuesday, May 29, 2018 at 1 pm, at the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine in Augusta.

Welcome

The meeting was called to order by co-chairs Tim Glidden and David Trahan who spoke briefly about the reasons that gave rise to the creation of the Task Force. A tremendous amount of land conservation has occurred since the creation of the Land for Maine's Future program more than 30 years ago. The time is right to reflect upon these accomplishments, as well as challenges, and to lay the groundwork for the next generation of land conservation in Maine. The Task Force was selected to represent a very broad spectrum of interests with recognition that land conservation touches many facets of Maine's society, communities and economy. The chairs stressed that while several statewide conservation groups (MCHT, TNC and SAM) provided the inspiration and some funding for the Task Force, it is the intent and expectation that the Task Force takes ownership of the process and its ultimate findings and recommendations.

The chairs introduced Jerry Bley and Liz Petruska who will serve as co-coordinators, providing staff support to the Task Force.

Introductions

Each Task Force member introduced themselves and provided a brief statement about how they are connected to land conservation in their personal or professional lives. These statements provided strong support for one particular comment that "Maine's conservation is not one thing." Task Force members reported many interests including conserving intact landscapes, working landscapes, off-road vehicle (ORV) access, wildlife, and traditional recreational uses, and finding balance amongst conservation, economy and growth. They urged their colleagues to consider tough issues, among them being changes in land-use patterns and policies, the intersection of conservation and rural poverty, how benchmarks and future land acquisition goals are established, and how conserved lands can best connect people and place. There was shared acknowledgement of successes to-date and agreement that there is more work to be done.

Presentation

Jerry Bley and Liz Petruska gave a presentation reviewing the past 30 years of land conservation. The presentation provided information on:

- the history of land conservation in the state
- data on acres of land conserved and the amount and sources of funding provided for it
- an overview of the types of lands that have been conserved (iconic places, working forests, wildlife habitat, farmland, working waterfront, recreation lands)
- significant tools and resources that enabled conservation successes (conservation easements, significant partnerships, public support)
- emerging issues and challenges (growing stewardship needs, changing demographics, climate change)

Following the presentation there was time for questions and discussion. Task Force members reflected on a variety of issues, including:

- the potential impact of renewable energy sources such as wind and solar
- the public perception of land conservation organizations
- the extent to which public access (especially to water) is restricted to very small parcels that are suffering from over-use
- the explosion of ticks
- how we might choose to conserve lands that can also be an economic asset for both the state and local communities
- the importance of having a trusted data source – for legislators and the public
- rethinking the built environment – how will changes in technology affect growth patterns; how do we avoid the pitfalls associated with everyone wanting their own little piece of paradise
- the importance of volunteer networks and the challenges with younger generations not being involved in the same ways

#### Discussion about Task Force Work and Processes

The final portion of the meeting was devoted to a discussion about the Task Force's proposed scope of work and process. The co-chairs spoke briefly about the anticipated product, which they envision to be a set of findings and recommendations to be considered by policy-makers and the public. They reported their interest in operating as much as possible by consensus. The legislators on the Task Force emphasized the importance of timing recommendations to coincide with the legislative calendar.

The Task Force reviewed a list of suggested topics for the next four meetings. Proposed topics included:

- Recreational Resources
- Ecological Resources
- Working Lands
- Local Economies
- Community Benefits
- Overarching Topics (stewardship, funding, partnerships, financial impact on communities)

Jerry and Liz will incorporate the ideas that came up during the discussion following the presentation into these areas as they prepare for each meeting. Task Force members were encouraged to think about whether there were additional topics that should be added. Jerry and Liz will prepare concise briefing papers on each topic that will be shared with Task Force prior to the meeting. The proposed format for the next 4 meetings is to have several panelists provide short presentations related to each topic and to leave most of the time for questions and discussion amongst the Task Force, panelists and other invited guests.

The Task Force agreed that it welcomed public attendance and participation in the process, but that public comments should be held until a designated time at the end of each meeting, and to the proposed public listening sessions. Public comments at regular Task Force meetings will be limited to just a few minutes per person. Task Force members will listen but not respond to comments during that portion of the meeting. A simple website has been created ([www.maineconservationtaskforce.com](http://www.maineconservationtaskforce.com)) to provide an overview of the Task Force, a list of members, and information about meetings and other resources. The website also has a mechanism for people to sign up to receive information about the Task Force, and to submit comments on any issue. Liz and Jerry will manage this process.

The Task Force discussed how to interact with the media and reviewed a draft press release to go out following the first meeting. A small correction was made to the quote in the second paragraph. It was suggested that a quote from a non-legislative member be included, so as not to give a false impression that the Task Force is sanctioned by the Legislature. It was agreed that the press release should be widely distributed and Task Force members were encouraged to share it with their local media outlets. Jerry and Liz proposed that media requests be funneled either through them or through co-chairs Tim and David, so that there is consistency in the official messages from the Task Force.

The Task Force set the following schedule for its next 4 meetings:

- Friday, June 29th from 9 – 1
- Tuesday, July 24th from 9 – 1
- Wednesday, September 12th from 1 – 5
- Thursday, November 1<sup>st</sup> from 9 – 1

Task Force members were encouraged to attend as many meetings in person as possible, but the SAM Conference room has Skype and other remote meeting connection capabilities if necessary.

#### Public Comments

There were no public comments.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4 pm.