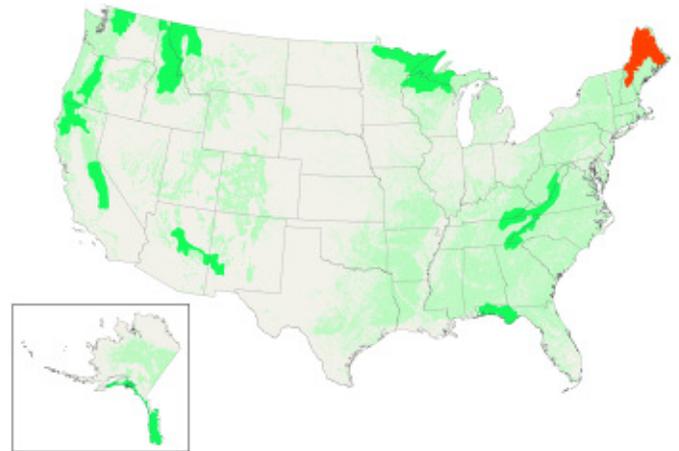
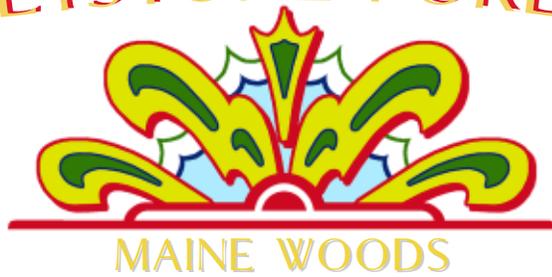


KEYSTONE FOREST



Physical Description

Henry David Thoreau was so inspired by the forests of Maine in the mid-1800s that he proposed that it become a “national preserve.” Today, the 10 million-acre “Maine Woods,” part of the larger New England Acadian forest ecoregion, remain the largest undeveloped forest in the eastern United States. A mix of spruce-fir coniferous forest and beech-maple hardwood forest richly carpet this vast remnant of the legendary North Woods. Within this forest is a wide variety of native plant and wildlife species, including

moose, deer, black bear, beaver, loon, broad-winged hawk, blue-spotted salamander and brook trout. The region provides habitat for endangered and sensitive species such as the Atlantic salmon, bald eagle, spruce grouse, Canada lynx, pine marten, Northern bog lemming, blueback trout and small-whorled pogonia. There is also potential habitat for the restoration of extirpated species including the Eastern wolf, cougar, wolverine and woodland caribou.

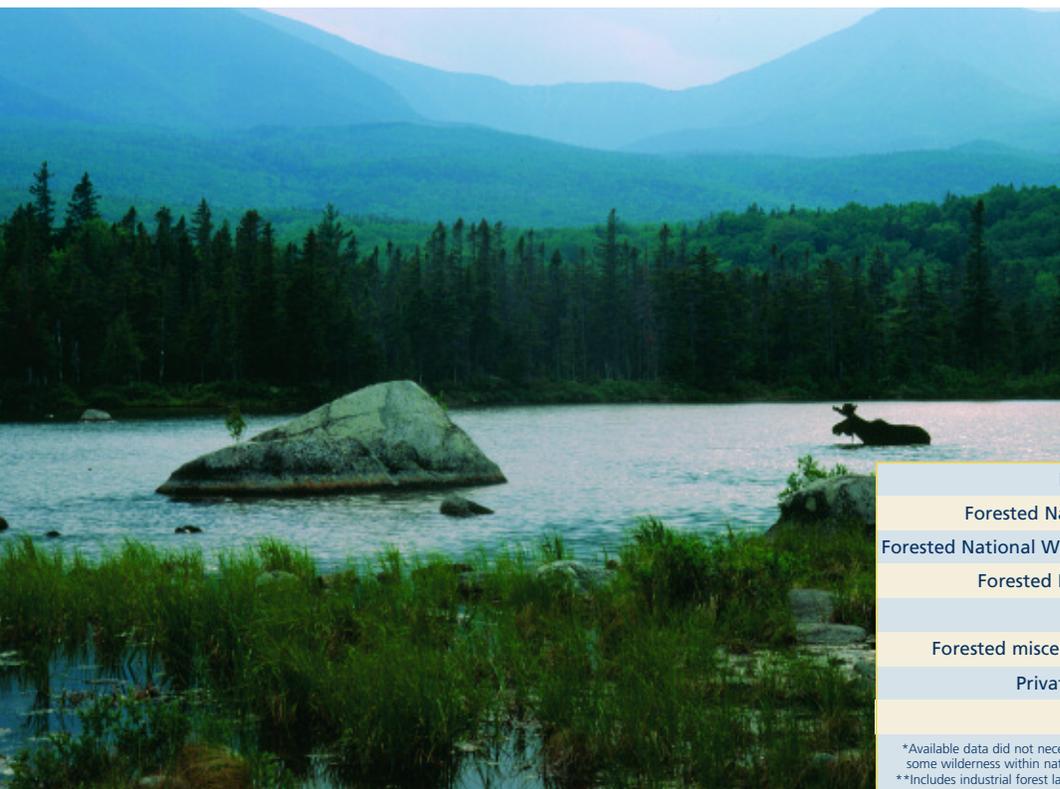
The landscape is mountainous, reaching its highest point on 5,271-foot

Mount Katahdin, dissected by major rivers such as the Allagash, Kennebec, Penobscot and St. John, and dotted with thousands of pristine lakes and ponds, including 75,000-acre Moosehead Lake. The Maine Woods play a critical environmental role as the headwaters of several major rivers, a massive carbon sink to help mitigate global warming, and a largely intact reservoir of native biodiversity. In the crowded northeastern United States, the Maine Woods offer outstanding backcountry recreation, particularly hiking, camping, canoeing, boating, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, nature study and solitude.

Threats

Maine has one of the smallest percentages of public land of any state. Less than five percent is protected in public or private conservation ownership, and

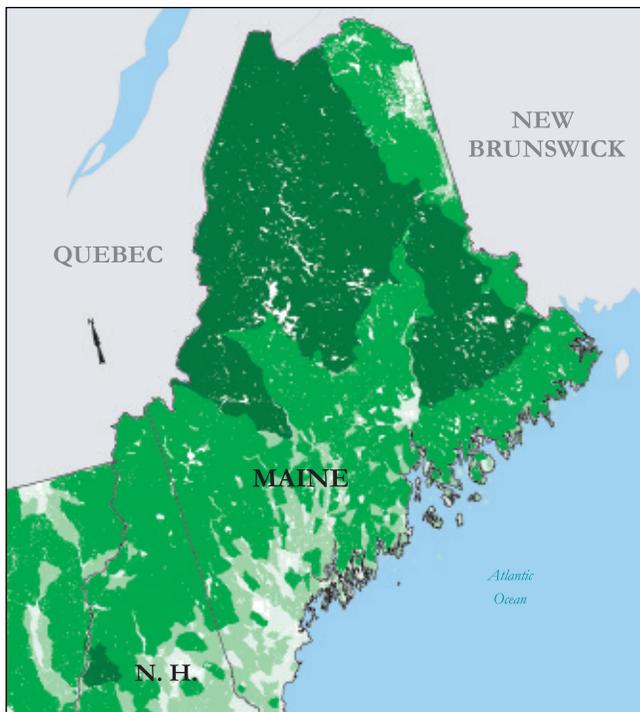
The Maine Woods are home to a variety of wildlife species including the moose shown here at Baxter Park.



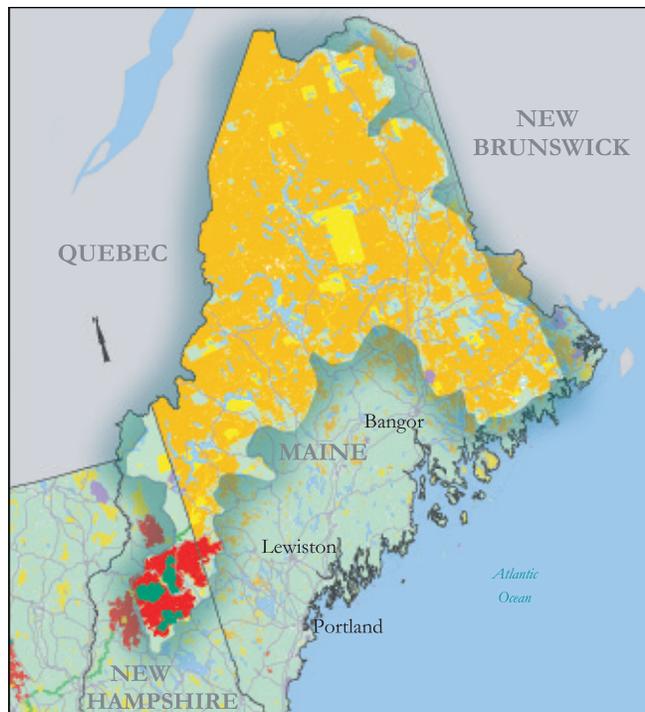
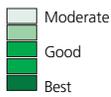
Forested BLM Lands (non-wilderness)	0
Forested National Forest Lands (non-wilderness)	458,636
Forested National Wildlife Refuge Lands (non-wilderness)	14,339
Forested National Park Lands (non-wilderness)*	2,162
Forested Wilderness	101,239
Forested miscellaneous public and private preserves	10,048,127**
Privately owned, unprotected forest lands	2,186,609
Total Forested Lands	12,811,112

*Available data did not necessarily distinguish wilderness from non-wilderness within national parks, so some wilderness within national parks may be included within this statistic.
**Includes industrial forest lands in Maine

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Forest Quality



Forest Ownership



less than one percent is preserved as wilderness. The famed "Appalachian Trail" begins in the Maine Woods, but it is only a thin "beauty strip" increasingly hemmed-in by clearcuts, roads and motorized recreation.

Transnational paper and timber companies, investment partnerships and real-estate speculators own most of the land in a few large blocks. During the last two decades these landowners have clearcut an area of forest larger than Delaware, built 15,000 miles of logging roads and subdivided remote lakeshores for second-home development. Intensive motorized recreation penetrates areas that were not long ago wild and roadless. More than five million acres of land have been sold in the last decade, with only a tiny portion being acquired by the public or other conservation buyers. Without the creation of new public parks and preserves, the Maine Woods will probably be irretrievably fragmented and

degraded within the next two decades.

Efforts to Increase Protected Areas

There is an existing proposal submitted to the National Park Service for the creation of a 3.2 million-acre Maine Woods National Park and Preserve in the heart of the Maine Woods. This new park would bring the land back into public ownership, restore past damage from logging and other industrial uses, guarantee public recreational access and serve as the foundation for a sustainable regional economy.

*Written by Michael Kellett
Restore the North Woods
www.restore.org*