MLTN
MAINE LAND TRUST NETWORK

LAND TRUSTS WORK FOR MAINE



What is a Land Trust?

Maine boasts more than 80 land trusts, community-supported, non-profits that have permanently conserved more than 2.5 million acres–12% of the state. This network of privately-owned properties offers many of the benefits people have come to enjoy on Maine's public lands, including access to the outdoors for traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, snowmobiling and wildlife observation, but that's just the beginning. Land trusts also maintain more than a thousand miles of recreational trails; provide land for sustainably managed working forests, farms, and waterfronts; protect valuable wildlife habitats; and present community programming that enhances the lives of families throughout Maine.

Maine Has Very Little Public Land

One reason Maine has such an active land trust community is because Maine has the lowest percentage of public lands among all states in our region. At 6.5%, it is also one of the lowest percentages in the country, lower than 36 other states.

Most states rely heavily on government, at all levels, to acquire and manage public lands to meet the needs and desires of their citizens to secure public access to the outdoors, support natural resource-based industries, protect wildlife habitat and safeguard public drinking water supplies. In Maine, where government land ownership is low, land trusts have stepped up to meet these public goals by acquiring many conservation lands without government support and by partnering with government to purchase and manage new and existing protected properties.

Maine land trusts are also national leaders in the use of conservation easements. When public conservation benefits are secured with easements, protected properties remain privately-owned and on the tax rolls. Easements are the tool used to protect more than 75% of the land conserved by Maine land trusts.

Percent of Public Land, by State

Maine ranks last in New England

1. New Hampshire	20.2%
2. Massachusetts	14.8%
3. Vermont	14.4%
4. Rhode Island	11.1%
5. Connecticut	10.4%
6. **Maine**	**6.5%**

Based on numbers from "Federal Land Ownership: Overview and Data" a 2017 Congressional Report and information collected from state websites, including individual State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans. Public lands are defined as conservation properties owned by Federal, State, or local governments.



Photo credits cover (clockwise from top) Bridget Besaw, Presumpscot Regional Land Trust, Downeast Lakes Land Trust, Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust, Downeast Lakes Land Trust, and Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust.

In many parts of the country, the burden of public access to the outdoors is mostly the responsibility of government and taxpayers. In Maine, our more modest network of public lands are complimented by a privately-funded land trust system that provides many additional places where we can hunt, hike, fish, snowmobile, ATV, picnic, birdwatch, walk our dogs, and enjoy nature–usually for free.



Photo courtesy Loon Echo Land Trust

This report includes a snapshot of the work being done by land trusts across the state and their impact on

- ***Expanding Public Access*** to the Outdoors
- Benefiting the ***Tourism Economy***
- Supporting ***Rural Economies***
- Strengthening Our ***Local Communities***

For more information on Maine's land trust community, and the work of specific land trusts in Maine, visit www.mltn.org.

Expanding Public Access to the Outdoors

Maine's network of more than 80 land trusts has significantly increased public access to the outdoors for activities including hiking, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, ATV riding, birdwatching, boating, and sightseeing. Based on a survey completed in 2017, Maine's land trust conserved lands offer the following outdoor recreational amenities:

- **1260 miles** *of hiking and walking trails*
- **275 miles** *of mountain biking trails*
- **210** *beaches/swimming areas*
- **203** *boat launch sites*
- **345 miles** of *ATV riding trails*
- **570 miles** *of snowmobiling trails*
- **2.34 million acres** *of land open for hunting*

Enhancing Public Lands



Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust helps to manage Dodge Point, a state-owned public property that links with land trust and town-owned conservation areas between Newcastle and Boothbay to form a larger wildlife and recreational corridor.

These recreational amenities available on land trust conserved lands are part of a larger network of conservation lands in Maine, which includes State Parks and Public Lands, State Wildlife Management Areas, Acadia National Park, the Appalachian Trail and other federally-protected properties, and municipal parks and other green spaces. A great example of this can be found in southern York County, where Mount Agamenticus forms the centerpiece of a 13,500-acre recreation and conservation area where land trust preserves, municipal parks, state wildlife management areas, and private conserved lands seamlessly connect to the benefit of resident flora, fauna, and outdoor enthusiasts. The region boasts 40 miles of trails used by an estimated 30,000 visitors each year for snowmobiling, mountain biking, ATV riding, and hiking. These lands are overseen by a steering committee with representatives from the Towns of York and South Berwick, York Water District, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Great Works Regional Land Trust, York Land Trust, and The Nature Conservancy.

With so many recreational amenities to offer, it is not surprising that land trusts throughout Maine are busy partnering in different ways with innkeepers, guides, outfitters, local chambers of commerce, and others focused on making Maine a more desirable place for visitors to explore. Here are some examples from around the state:

Southern Maine

Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust (BTLT) is supported annually by more than 80 local businesses, including water sport companies, restaurants, book stores, hotels and inns. Each year, BTLT works with many of these business members to co-sponsor community programs and events.



Photo courtesy Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust

Midcoast Maine

Boothbay Region Land Trust has reported over 67,000 annual visitors to its preserves – that's a number greater than the entire population of Portland. Their preserve guide is the most requested brochure at the Boothbay Harbor Region Chamber of Commerce. It features 16 preserves covering 1,169 acres, and over 32 miles of hiking trails.



Photo courtesy Boothbay Region Land Trust

Downeast Maine

Downeast Lakes Land Trust (DLLT) partners with 40 Grand Lake Stream guides who bring clients to their Downeast Lakes Community Forest. DLLT also invites a dozen area lodges and inns to direct their guests to fish, hunt, hike, boat, and enjoy other forms of outdoor recreation there.



Northern Maine

A 2016 study conducted by economist David Vail found that lodge guests, visitors, and activities within the Appalachian Mountain Club's 75,000-acre Maine Woods property generated $2.18 million in spending in Piscataquis County in 2015.



Western Maine

Mahoosuc Land Trust plays a prominent part in supporting what the Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce calls a "one-of-a-kind destination." The chamber, local businesses, and fishing guides direct many visitors to the trust's scenic mountain hikes, boat launch sites, and pristine swimming holes.





Photo courtesy Western Foothills Land Trust

Supporting Rural Economies

Maine land trusts also conserve working landscapes



Photo courtesy Bridget Besaw

Land trusts have completed projects in all sixteen counties that benefit important Maine-based industries such as forest products, fishing, and agriculture. These conservation efforts bolster local economies and support jobs, especially in rural parts of Maine.



Photo courtesy Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust

Land Trust Conserved Working Lands

- More than 85% of the acres land trusts have conserved (2.14 million acres) are working forestlands
- 36,000 acres of working farmlands
- 7 working waterfront properties
- More than 60 access sites for clamming, worming, and commercial fishing

Strengthening Our Communities

In addition to welcoming visitors to public preserves, Maine land trusts serve communities in many other ways.



Partnering with Local Schools

More than 30,000 Maine students participate in land trust-sponsored education programs in Maine each year! Land trusts partner with local schools to create outdoor classrooms, promote field trips, and engage students in hands-on learning opportunities.



Maintaining Municipal Parks and State Lands

Maine land trusts act as key partners with municipal and state governments in developing, maintaining, and monitoring hiking trails, boat launch sites, picnic areas, and other outdoor recreational amenities enjoyed by visitors on public lands around the state.



Improving Water Quality

Many land trusts collaborate with local governments and private landowners to restore wetlands, monitor water quality, improve fish passage, and implement other practices to protect rivers, streams, lakes and ponds, and to safeguard clean drinking water.



Connecting with Nature

An estimated 65,000 people attend land trust events in Maine every year. Activities range from guided walks for senior citizens, to "learn to fish days" for youth, to outdoor concerts, to beach clean ups, and everything in between.

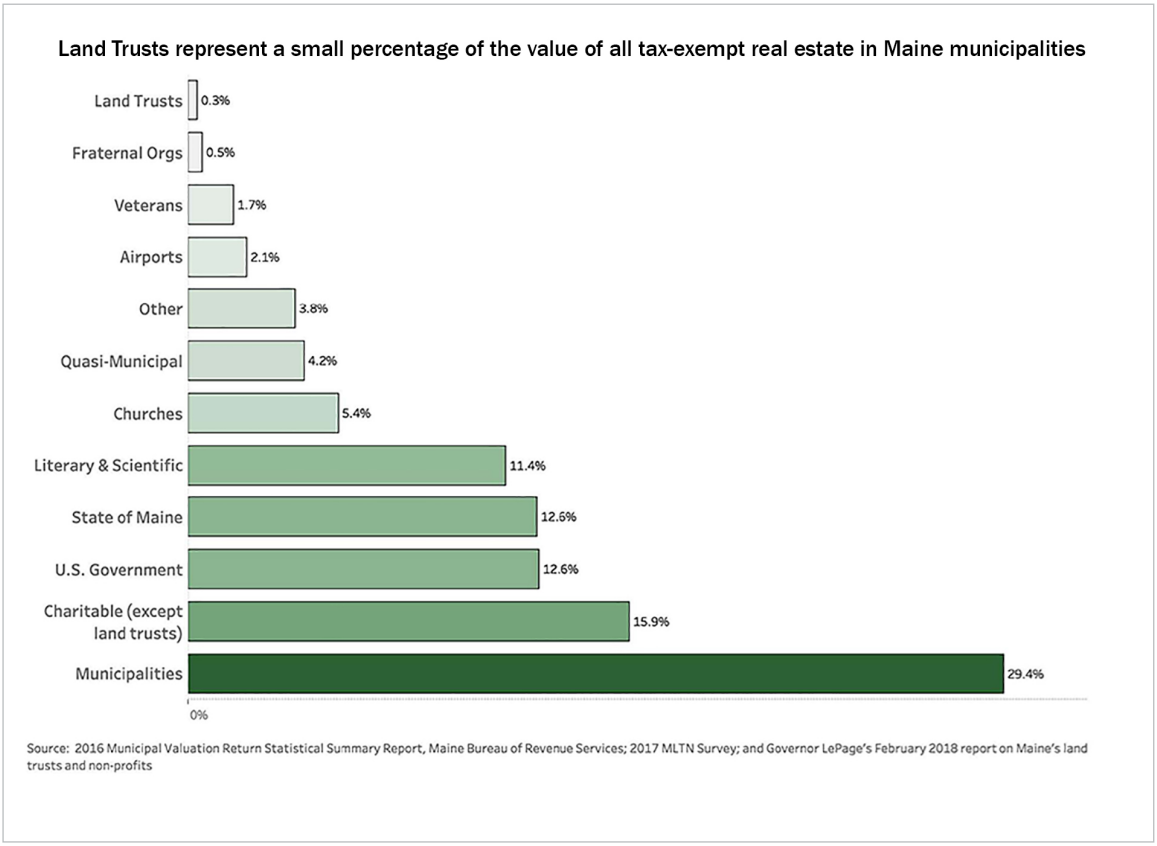
Land Trusts: A Private Sector Answer to Meet Public Needs

Maine has one of the most active land trust communities in the nation, with more land trusts per capita than any other state. Collectively, Maine's 80+ land conservation organizations have conserved a little more than **2.5 million acres of the state**.

- **1,900,000 acres:** privately-owned lands with legal agreements that limit development and protect natural resources. Most are managed as working forests, available to the public for hiking, hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities.
- **600,000 acres:** lands owned by land trusts as natural areas, scenic landscapes, working lands, and destinations available to the public for traditional outdoor recreation.

Most Lands Remain on Tax Rolls

All public land in Maine, the more than 1.3 million acres of conservation areas owned by Federal, state, and local governments, is exempt from paying property taxes. Since Maine land trusts provide similar public benefits as those enjoyed on government-owned properties, many land trust conserved lands are also eligible for property tax exemption. However, Maine's land trusts keep nearly 95% of the 2.5 million acres they have collectively conserved on the local property tax rolls.





To learn more and find a land trust near you, go to www.mltn.org.

Photo courtesy Boothbay Region Land Trust