



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY

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WALTER E. WHITCOMB
COMMISSIONER

Date: January 11, 2018

To: Downeast Region Plan Advisory Committee Members
From: Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry,
Bureau of Parks and Lands
Re: Five-Year Review of the Downeast Region Management Plan: Comments and Responses

Enclosed are the Advisory Committee comments on the 2017 five-year review of the 2007 Downeast Region Management Plan and the responses to these comments by the Bureau of Parks and Lands. The Plan guides the management of public lands at Donnell Pond, Rocky Lake, Curler Coast, Great Heath and several small lots. The Bureau is required to report to the Advisory Committee at five-year intervals on accomplishments and changing conditions that may warrant amendments to the plan. The Bureau identified one new issue that warranted Committee discussion.

The Bureau mailed its 2017 five-year report for the Downeast Region plan to the Advisory Committee members on December 7, 2017, requesting their comments on the report. The comments of individual Committee members and the Bureau's response to each are presented in the attached table.

The Bureau received written comments from two Advisory Committee members and takes particular note of the following:

Blackwoods Scenic Byway: The Byway Corridor Committee continues work on implementing the strategies enumerated in the Byway Plan, some of which directly relate to the public lands at the Donnell Pond unit. The Bureau will continue to participate in the Byway Committee, and contribute to planning for interpretive and other improvements as requested.

Blueberry Leases at Donnell Pond and Cutler Coast: There were no comments in opposition to a temporary non-organic status for these leases to expand options for control of invasive plants. The Bureau notes, however, concerns about potential ecosystem impacts of herbicide use, and will work to minimize those potential impacts.

Based on the responses received and our understanding of the challenges in controlling invasive plants in the blueberry barrens, the Bureau will issue new leases for the barrens this year that will allow a temporary break from the organic requirement. As described in the response to comments, the Bureau will seek the advice of an Extension Service Specialist in formulating the new lease requirements, and the most environmentally appropriate plan for management of the barrens. A return to organic status will be required to renew the leases after the first five years. No Plan amendment is required for this temporary change and the Bureau will not seek further comment from the Advisory Committee. Thus, this five-year review process is completed.