

Bethel Community Forest

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LAND



As the wood products industry declines in rural Maine after decades of dominance, communities across the region are working hard to diversify their local economies. That's the case in Bethel, where residents are seeking to transition from a timber-based economy to one that more fully includes tourism and outdoor recreation. To help, The Trust for Public Land is working with residents to create a community forest that will advance a new "triple bottom line" as it grows their economy, protects the environment, and unites the community around a new, shared resource.

Under the town's leadership and at the behest of community members, The Trust for Public Land is working to protect 980 acres of forestland in the heart of town that will become the new Bethel Community Forest.

Our success will expand and diversify local recreational opportunities, unlock access to an additional 2,500 acres of public land, and empower the community through local ownership and management of the land.

The forest will safeguard Bethel's economic, natural, and recreational resources, and create a new, and much-needed revenue stream for the town through sustainable forestry practices.

A forest in the heart of town

Located only two miles from the village center, the property is one of the last large tracks of undeveloped land in Bethel, a microcosm of the mountainous, forested landscapes of western Maine. Protection will provide an essential link to an interconnected trail network and tie Bethel Village to the region's backcountry. Given its location and natural beauty – which is defined by stunning views of the White Mountains – the land is likely to be sold and developed if not secured.

Improving recreation, attracting tourists

When protected, Bethel Community Forest will become a community recreation hub for all types of trail users as it provides close-to-home hiking, biking and skiing opportunities. Protections will unlock public access to the adjacent town-owned Bingham Forest, and create a 3,500-acre block of conserved land right next to Sunday River Ski Resort. In addition to serving Bethel's 2,600 residents, the forest will support the town's growing tourism economy by attracting visitors from throughout the region.

A working forest for the community

The forest will also help the town adapt to new economic realities that are impacting rural towns throughout the region. Just as it bolsters the region's recreation industry, the property's management as a working forest will help support jobs for foresters and loggers, and supply timber to the region's remaining paper mills.

Creating a healthier community

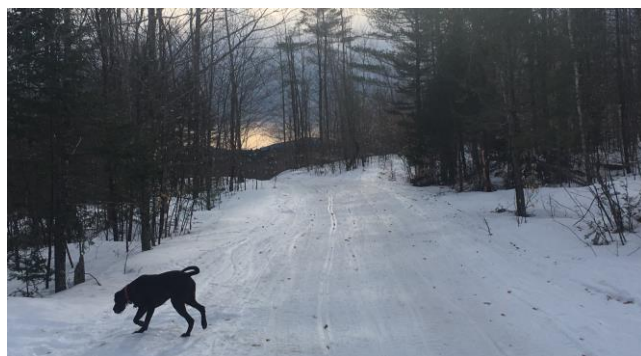
At the same time, the new community forest will help make Bethel a healthier place to live. In

Maine, for example, obesity rates have increased from 10 percent in 1990 to 30 percent in 2015, in part because of inactivity and a lack of exercise. Creating close-to-home parks and trails like Bethel Community Forest can help address these health challenges at a local level by encouraging residents to get outside and seek healthy, active recreation.

The vision

The Trust for Public Land is working in partnership with the community, The Northern Forest Center, and Mahoosuc Pathways to acquire and create Bethel Community Forest. The land will be owned by Mahoosuc Pathways on behalf of the community, and will be managed with direction from the Town. A conservation easement on the property will ensure that it is protected forever.

In order to create Bethel Community Forest, we must raise \$1.5 million. Only a combination of state, federal, and private funding will allow us to reach our goal by the 2018 deadline. Please join us to learn how you can help. Together we can preserve all that makes Maine special; we can safeguard this diverse, wild landscape and ensure its protection for generations to come.



The Trust for Public Land
creates parks and protects land
for people, ensuring healthy,
livable communities for
generations to come.

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