Downeast Lakes
LAND TRUST ®

Joint Resolution to Provide Traditional Access and Protect Roads and Trails During Spring Mud Season

The Passamaquoddy Tribe and Downeast Lakes Land Trust (DLLT) are pleased to announce that a dispute over access to unpaved forest roads in DLLT's Downeast Lakes Community Forest has been resolved cooperatively and to the satisfaction of both parties. The disagreement arose in response to DLLT's efforts to protect roads and trails used to access the community forest and adjacent Passamaquoddy lands from damage caused during the brief annual spring mud season.

The Passamaquoddy Tribe's Indian Township Reservation borders the Downeast Lakes Community Forest to the east, and tribal trust lands adjoin the community forest to the west. Privately maintained forest roads crossing the community forest are used year-round by tribal members and others to travel between tribal lands. Year-round access to tribal lands is important to the Tribe for several reasons. First and foremost, Passamaquoddy tribal members rely on DLLT maintained roads to access homes located on Passamaquoddy trust lands to the west of the community forest. In addition, springtime access is particularly important in order to support Passamaquoddy sustenance activities, including the harvest of food and medicine, and a spring bear hunting season. DLLT's efforts to inform local residents of proposed mud season access restrictions brought to light the concerns of Tribal leaders, who met with representatives of DLLT to seek a solution.

The parties are entering into a joint road maintenance agreement for the Fourth Lake Road, the primary artery used to access the community forest and Passamaquoddy lands to the west. Costs will be shared by both parties to maintain – and improve – road conditions to a level sufficient to permit safe, reliable travel along the east-west corridor. Beginning in Summer 2021, the parties will work together on a multiyear plan to improve the quality of the Fourth Lake Road, especially with regards to water drainage, so the road can better withstand year-round usage.

Significantly, DLLT will grant permanent right-of-way easements to the Passamaquoddy Tribe and its citizens across the Fourth Lake Road and the East Shore Road, which accesses tribal land across the 2,025-acre Lakeville Expansion, a parcel which DLLT seeks to purchase with assistance from The Trust for Public Land. All other roads in the Downeast Lakes Community Forest, which are smaller and less durable to mud season traffic, will be closed briefly each year during the spring mud season. The parties further agreed to permitting open access to a small inholding of tribal land at Buck Knoll, on Sysladobsis Lake.

“As a life-long resident of Motahkomikuk (Indian Township), I am proud to be able to announce this historic agreement with our neighbors, the Downeast Lakes Land Trust,” said Chief William Nicholas, Sr. of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township. Chief Nicholas continued, “I have fond memories of traveling on Fourth Lake Road as part of the spring sustenance activities that have supported my people since time immemorial and am thrilled that this agreement will ensure similar, continued access to Passamaquoddy citizens for generations to come. This agreement will protect and recognize what the Passamaquoddy People have always known, which is that our connection and access to lands in the St. Croix River Watershed, including those now included in the DLLT

community forest, are a critical part of our cultural identity that must be preserved for future generations of the Passamaquoddy People."

"The Passamaquoddy Tribe and the community of Grand Lake Stream share a long history of warm relations and cooperation," said David Montague, DLLT's President and CEO. "Since DLLT's founding in 2001 by members of the Grand Lake Stream community, DLLT and the Passamaquoddy Tribe have successfully partnered on numerous collaborative projects that have benefitted both communities. We naturally share a lot of common goals: we care about the land and the people who live on it and who make a living from it. Sometimes we disagree on things, as neighbors will from time to time, but we've always found a way to work together and find common ground. I want to thank Tribal leaders, and especially Chief William Nicholas, for working with DLLT's Board of Directors to find a practical solution that meets the needs of DLLT and the Passamaquoddy Tribe."

Following this resolution, both Parties have agreed to renewed and strengthened efforts to continue their collaborative initiatives for the well-being of the region's land and people.

ABOUT THE PASSAMAQUODDY TRIBE: The Passamaquoddy Tribe (or "Peskotomuhkati" in the Passamaquoddy language) is a federally-recognized Tribal Nation whose ancestral territory encompasses the St. Croix River Watershed, including much of what is now the State of Maine and New Brunswick, Canada. The Tribe's current day landholdings span east to west across Maine but are focused on communities located at Motahkomikuk (Indian Township) and Sipayik (Pleasant Point). There are currently approximately 3,700 enrolled citizens of the Tribe.

ABOUT THE DOWNEAST LAKES LAND TRUST: Downeast Lakes Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2001 by local residents in Grand

Lake Stream, Maine, with a mission to contribute to the long-term economic and environmental well-being of the Downeast Lakes region through the conservation and exemplary management of its forests and waters. The trust sustainably manages the 55,678-acre Downeast Lakes Community Forest for wildlife habitat, public recreation, and a sustainable forest economy. To learn more and support our work, visit www.downeastlakes.org.

DLLT Photo Contest Deadline - April 15th

Don't forget to submit your best photographs of the region to this year's DLLT Photo Contest **by April 15th!** Categories are Community, Forests,

Sunrise/Sunset, Traditions, Waterways, Wildlife, and (new this year!) Trail Camera.

All photos can be submitted by emailing photo@downeastlakes.org. For full contest rules and details, please visit https://downeastlakes.org/events/dllt-photo-contest/. Winning entries will be featured in the summer edition of *Downeast Lakes Traditions* and at DLLT's booth at the Grand Lake Stream Folk Art Festival!

DLLT Summer Events and Programs!

Downeast Lakes Land Trust summer events and education programs are a staple of Grand Lake Stream. We have an awesome slate of experiences for 2021, with something for everyone. Visit our website for all the details!

Are you passionate about conservation? Love to visit the Downeast Lakes region? Contribute to our motto: *Forests and Lakes - For People - Forever®*!

Donate

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