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APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB ADDS 27,000-ACRE MAINE FOREST TO ITS HISTORIC MAINE WOODS INITIATIVE

Purchase of Pleasant River Headwaters Forest marks 100,000 acres under permanent protection by Appalachian Mountain Club's Maine Woods Initiative, the most important multi-use recreation and land conservation project in the United States today.

BOSTON, MA (August 30, 2022) — Today, the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) purchased the nearly 27,000-acre Pleasant River Headwaters Forest in Piscataquis County, Maine, for \$18.5 million from The Conservation Fund. The purchase, first agreed to in 2019, is part of Appalachian Mountain Club's Maine Woods Initiative, the most important multi-use recreation and land conservation project in the United States today.

To date, AMC has acquired and permanently protected more than 100,000 acres of forest and fish habitat in Maine, investing more than \$87.5 million in the project.

"Our acquisition of the Pleasant River Headwaters Forest is a tremendous milestone in AMC's ongoing commitment to advance the overall ecological and economic health of the region," said Susan Arnold, Interim President and CEO of AMC. "Through AMC's ownership, we will expand existing fish habitat restoration efforts to benefit threatened species like native brook trout and endangered Atlantic salmon, conduct responsible forestry operations, and offer the public guaranteed access to outdoor recreation opportunities."

AMC's Maine Woods Initiative seeks to permanently protect land in Maine's famed 100-Mile Wilderness through an innovative approach to conservation that combines outdoor recreation, resource protection, sustainable forestry, education, and community partnerships. The organization has developed a robust nature-based tourism operation that includes a series of lodges, 130 miles of trails for hiking and skiing, an environmental education program for schools throughout the region, and a significant sustainable forestry operation. All of the land will remain on local tax rolls.

The Pleasant River Headwaters Forest is an especially high priority for the Appalachian Mountain Club because it is adjacent to 75,000 acres currently owned and managed by AMC. The property is situated in the center of the 100-Mile Wilderness Area that stretches along the Appalachian Trail corridor from Monson to Baxter State Park. Acquiring and restoring the property will conserve one of the last remaining large, unprotected forest blocks in the region.

"This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to protect a piece of the largest contiguous undeveloped forest in the eastern United States that forms the heart of a globally significant watershed," said Steve Tatko, Senior Director of Maine Conservation for AMC. "Purchasing this property guarantees public access for traditional uses for all, helps to expand a buffer of forever forest around the northernmost 100 miles of the Appalachian Trail, and protects regional forest products jobs that depend on responsible forestry to sustain local communities. This is an investment in the future of ecology and our economies at a time when we must do both. Maine remains the best place to do it."

In collaboration with AMC, The Conservation Fund purchased the property in February 2019 through its Working Forest Fund® program, which utilizes bridge capital to protect large, ecologically and economically important forestland from subdivision and fragmentation, allowing time for permanent conservation solutions to be implemented. The arrangement gave AMC time to raise the \$25 million needed to bring the working forestland into its permanent ownership, protection, and stewardship.

“Ownership and management by AMC of this magnificent addition to their Maine Woods Initiative lands will forever ensure this property will serve nature, people and the local economy,” said Tom Duffus, Vice President and Northeast Representative of The Conservation Fund. “AMC has demonstrated to all its sound, sustainable forest management and its contributions to the economy as well as its stellar stream passage work to benefit Atlantic salmon and other migratory fish. We are proud to be involved in this project as it is nationally important to the dramatic loss of forestlands in the United States.”

A lead gift of \$10 million from the Richard King Mellon Foundation provided early momentum to embark on the acquisition. Other significant funding was provided by a US Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) Recovery Land Acquisition grant through Maine’s Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, two USFWS North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s Wild East Action Fund.

“For more than three decades, the Richard King Mellon Foundation has worked with its nonprofit partners to conserve habitat throughout the United States, including several hundred thousand acres of Maine’s forestland and coastal ecosystems,” said Sam Reiman, director of the Foundation. “Our investment in this expansion of AMC’s Maine Woods Initiative builds on this conservation legacy - protecting a unique property for future use and enjoyment, and securing a globally-significant link in the northern forest ecosystem. From habit restoration to carbon sequestration, this project will have tremendous positive impact on Maine for generations to come.”

“A century ago, the founders of the Appalachian Mountain Club established a tremendous legacy when their advocacy efforts resulted in the creation of the White Mountain National Forest,” added Arnold. “The Maine Woods Initiative honors that legacy.”

About the Appalachian Mountain Club

The Appalachian Mountain Club is the nation’s oldest conservation and recreation organization, committed to fostering the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the outdoors. Since 1876, AMC has encouraged generations to deepen their passions for the outdoors and helped protect some of the most precious natural environments in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. Learn more at [outdoors.org](https://www.outdoors.org).

About The Conservation Fund

At The Conservation Fund, we make conservation work for America. By creating solutions that make environmental and economic sense, we are redefining conservation to demonstrate its essential role in our future prosperity. Top-ranked for efficiency and effectiveness, we have worked in all 50 states since 1985 to protect more than 8.5 million acres of land, including 465,000 acres in Maine. Through our Working Forest Fund®, we aim to permanently conserve five million acres of at-risk working forests to mitigate climate change, strengthen rural economies and protect natural ecosystems.

About the Richard King Mellon Foundation

Founded in 1947, the Richard King Mellon Foundation is the largest foundation in Southwestern Pennsylvania, and one of the [50 largest in the world](#). The Foundation’s 2021 year-end net

assets were \$3.4 billion, and its Trustees in 2021 disbursed \$152 million in grants and Program-Related Investments. The Foundation focuses its funding on six primary program areas, delineated in its [2021-2030 Strategic Plan](#). Through its Conservation program, the Foundation has helped to conserve more than 4.5 million acres of environmentally precious land in all 50 states. See: <https://www.rkmf.org/>

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