

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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**Images & Map:** [outdoors.org/mainewoods](http://outdoors.org/mainewoods)

### **NEARLY 27,000 ACRES PURCHASED IN MAINE'S NORTH WOODS FOR CONSERVATION AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

*Partnership aims to provide critical watershed protection for the Pleasant River and regional economic benefits through expanded nature-based tourism opportunities and sustainable forestry operations*

**GREENVILLE, Maine (February 11, 2019)** — America's longest-serving conservation organization, the [Appalachian Mountain Club](#), is teaming up with the country's top ranked environmental nonprofit, [The Conservation Fund](#), to protect nearly 27,000 acres of working forestland in Maine's North Woods.

On February 8, The Conservation Fund purchased the Pleasant River Headwaters Forest in Piscataquis County, Maine, for \$18.5 million from Conservation Resources, LLC. Under temporary ownership, The Conservation Fund will sustainably manage the 26,740 acres for the improvement and protection of forest resources, fish passage and continued recreational use. This arrangement gives the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) time to raise the \$25 million needed to bring the working forestland into its permanent ownership, protection, and stewardship. A lead gift of \$10 million has recently been secured from the Richard King Mellon Foundation.

The Pleasant River Headwaters Forest is an especially high priority for the Appalachian Mountain Club because it is adjacent to more than 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 acquisition will crystallize the conservation vision that underpins AMC's role as a fully vested partner in Maine's outdoor economy,” said AMC President and CEO John Judge. “It means deriving more value for more people from a more resilient landscape, and that's really exciting.”

This noteworthy conservation acquisition was made possible through The Conservation Fund's 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 land will remain on the tax rolls.

“Working forests, one of a kind outdoor recreation experiences, and aquatic habitats define Maine’s environment, communities, economy and way of life,” said Tom Duffus, Vice President and Northeast Representative for The Conservation Fund. “This partnership with the Appalachian Mountain Club will help to protect the beloved and unique characteristics of Maine’s North Woods by ensuring that forestland of both community- and nation-wide importance will always remain as forests. Together, we are working to establish permanent conservation solutions that meet the needs of people, protect wildlife habitat and provide economic benefits.”

The Appalachian Mountain Club intends to add the Pleasant River Headwaters Forest to its 75,000-acre Maine Woods property, which is a significant economic driver in the region. Here 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. The Appalachian Mountain Club currently supports 6% of the Piscataquis County economy including 56 jobs and generates \$1.7 million in annual spending by AMC operations and lodge guests.

Permanent conservation of the Pleasant River Headwaters Forest property will add to watershed protection of both the West and Middle Branches of the Pleasant River, which serve as a critical designated habitat for Atlantic salmon and native brook trout. Future efforts by the Appalachian Mountain Club to remove stream barriers and restore aquatic habitat on the property will help to reestablish renowned native brook trout populations and allow Atlantic salmon to return to native spawning grounds in the headwater streams of the West Branch for the first time in nearly two centuries—making it one of the only places in the state where this will be possible.

Future restorative forestry efforts on the property will position multi-use forestland as the ideal stronghold for ecological resilience and climate adaptability, providing more and higher quality wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) to local and regional mills while simultaneously improving habitat and doubling carbon sequestration on AMC’s Maine lands over the long term. Through careful forest management, AMC will leverage its ownership to sustain local economies and keep the land open for public access.

“The Pleasant River Headwaters Forest represents a keystone parcel—the hole in the doughnut—for landscape connectivity and resilience in the 100-Mile Wilderness,” said AMC Senior Vice President Walter Graff. “Securing its future and restoring late successional habitat here will put regional climate adaptation planning in league with the White Mountain National Forest and Adirondack Park, proving that forests that work hard for human communities can rank among those working hardest for natural communities, too.”

### **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 million acres, including 429,000 acres of working forests, coastal landscapes, and aquatic habitats that define Maine’s environment, communities, economy,

and way of life. Learn more at [conservationfund.org](https://www.conservationfund.org).

**About the Appalachian Mountain Club**

Founded in 1876, the Appalachian Mountain Club promotes the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the mountains, forests, waters, and trails of America's Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. Learn more at [outdoors.org](https://www.outdoors.org).

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