



THE HIGH PEAKS: QUILL HILL TO PERHAM STREAM

Ensuring Climate Resilience and Outdoor Access for All in Maine's Western Mountains

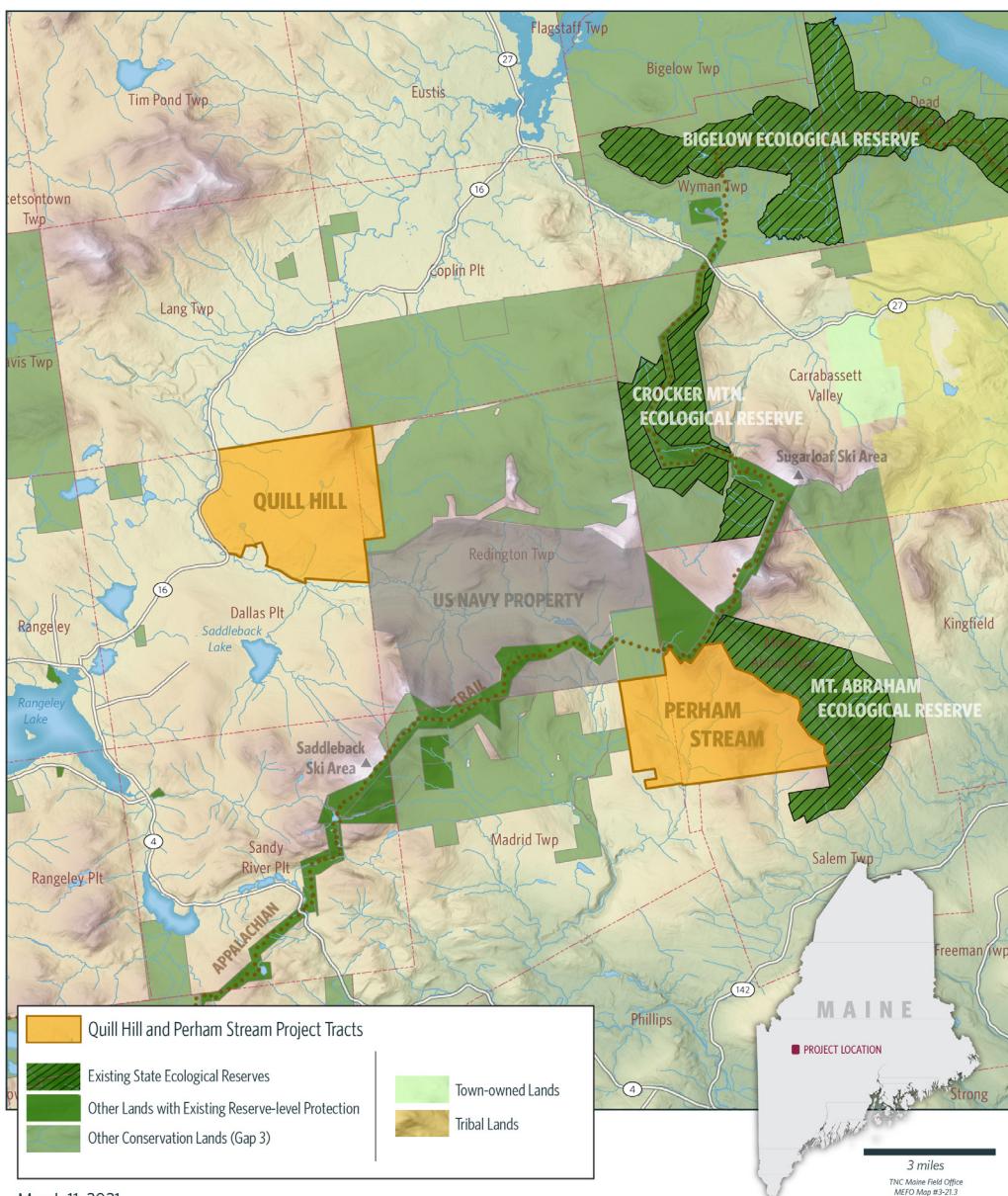
The Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land are partnering to permanently protect over 13,500 acres of public land in the High Peaks of Western Maine to mitigate climate impacts and ensure access to the outdoors for all.

Protecting the High Peaks region of Western Maine is a **critical step to mitigate the impacts of a warming climate**. The Nature Conservancy has identified the High Peaks region - and the Quill Hill to Perham Stream properties within it - as priority landscapes for enhancing carbon storage and the ability for species to adapt to climate change. The project will expand a key node of conserved lands along the Appalachian Trail Corridor, a major pathway of ecological connectivity in the eastern U.S.

The High Peaks is also one of Maine's most popular outdoor recreation destinations and is home to 10 of Maine's 14 highest peaks, hundreds of miles of trails, two of Maine's largest ski areas, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The area is a true four-season outdoor recreation destination with something for everyone. The quality of life and economy of local communities depends on having public access to land for outdoor recreation.

Yet only 15% of the High Peaks region is protected, and only some of that protected land has guaranteed public access. To compound this lack of protected land, the region is experiencing an unprecedented boom in real estate and development. Vacant land sales in Franklin County jumped by 50% over 2019 and 220% over 2018. The region is also seeing long-term growth. Over 40 years, the total number of new housing units increased by 295% for the project's census tract. **As two of the last unprotected large properties in a desirable location, Quill Hill and Perham Stream are uniquely vulnerable to development and permanent loss of public access.**

Protection of these parcels will create 13,500 new acres of public land, expanding an assemblage of connected, conserved lands to nearly 100,000 acres. Quill Hill and Perham Stream will provide essential wildlife habitat in a warming climate, carbon sequestration, and outdoor access for all.



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QUILL HILL

The 7,062-acre Quill Hill property—just 10 minutes from Rangeley—is a well-known destination that welcomes 30,000 visitors a year. The property features **an ADA-accessible trail system and 360-degree view of the Western Maine Mountains**. The Quill Hill property is home to recreational trails and complements nearby outdoor recreational resources including the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, Appalachian Trail, and Saddleback Ski Area. The land contains over 300 acres of wetlands, 10 miles of streams, and critical brook trout and lynx habitat.

The Quill Hill property will be protected via a conservation easement held by the State of Maine and U.S. Navy. The property will be managed for recreation, habitat, and sustainable forest management in accordance with a community-informed plan to be approved by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) and the Maine Forest Service.

PERHAM STREAM

The 6,495-acre Perham Stream property will be acquired in fee and owned by the State Bureau of Parks and Lands, and open to public recreation as part of Maine's Public Reserve system. **A majority (~5,000 acres) will become an ecological reserve, as an addition to the existing ecological reserve on Mt. Abraham**, which supports one of the largest and highest-quality areas of alpine and subalpine habitat in Maine outside of Baxter State Park. A smaller portion of the parcel will be managed as Public Reserve Lands with sustainable timber harvest.

Perham Stream lies directly adjacent to the Appalachian Trail corridor and features a mountainous bowl around Farmer Mountain, mid-elevation slopes of Mt. Abraham, and two headwater streams in the Kennebec River watershed that provide important cold-water habitat: Perham Stream in the Sandy River watershed and Quick Stream in the Carrabassett River watershed. The Sandy River watershed is widely considered to be the top priority in Maine for Atlantic salmon habitat recovery, with an active salmon recovery program underway. The property includes ~2,200 acres of Bicknell's Thrush habitat and excellent habitat for Canada lynx, and it is well known regionally for its moose population. The property is a popular destination for brook trout fishing, hunting, and wildlife viewing.



CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP IN THE HIGH PEAKS

The Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land are working closely together to secure public and private funding to protect Quill Hill to Perham Stream. **Every \$1 donated in private philanthropy will unlock \$10 in federal funding towards a total project goal of \$11.8 million.**

Protection of these properties will drive forward a 10-year effort to knit together nearly 100,000 acres of conserved and public land in the Maine High Peaks. The partnership will leverage complementary skills and resources of both organizations to complete one of the most ambitious land protection efforts in the High Peaks to date.



About The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthier, more resilient, and more equitable communities. The Trust for Public Land has protected and created public access to 3.5 million acres and 2,000 miles of trails across the United States. In Maine, The Trust for Public Land has protected 180,000 acres by creating 80 new parks and public lands from the Eastern Promenade Trail in Portland to Katahdin Lake in Baxter State Park.



About The Nature Conservancy

TNC works to preserve and strengthen natural resources, using the best available science, a creative spirit, and a non-confrontational approach to craft innovative solutions to complex conservation problems at scales that matter and in ways that will endure. Founded in 1956, TNC in Maine protects ecologically important lands and waters. We care for more than 295,000 acres of land and have participated in protecting over 1,771,000 acres. We are the only organization in Maine that is comprehensively addressing conservation of the state's forest, freshwater, and marine resources.