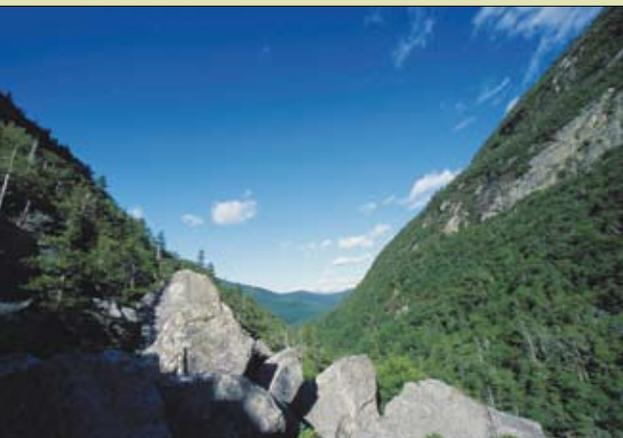


# Seeing the Mahoosucs Whole

*Highlights from  
the Mahoosuc Region  
Resources Report*

MAHOOSUC INITIATIVE



*Mahoosuc Notch*

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**Mahoosuc Initiative Mission and Role:** The mission of the Mahoosuc Initiative is to provide Mahoosuc communities with information and tools to guide future change for the prosperity and well-being of all residents. The Mahoosuc Initiative seeks to play a leadership role by convening community conversations, providing technical assistance and research, and bringing new federal, state, and private funding to support projects in land conservation, sustainable forestry, and other community priorities.

### *Mahoosuc Initiative Partners:*

#### **Mahoosuc Land Trust**

207-824-3806; [jm@mahoosuc.org](mailto:jm@mahoosuc.org); [www.Mahoosuc.org](http://www.Mahoosuc.org)

#### **Androscoggin River Watershed Council**

207-527-2163; [flea@avcog.org](mailto:flea@avcog.org); [www.avcnet.org/arwc/](http://www.avcnet.org/arwc/)

#### **Tri-County Community Action Program**

603-752-7001; [lkelly@tccap.org](mailto:lkelly@tccap.org); [www.tccap.org](http://www.tccap.org)

#### **Northern Forest Alliance**

802-253-8227; [jdaley@nfainfo.org](mailto:jdaley@nfainfo.org); [www.northernforestalliance.org](http://www.northernforestalliance.org)

#### **Appalachian Mountain Club**

207-725-2248; [bwentzell@outdoors.org](mailto:bwentzell@outdoors.org); [www.outdoors.org](http://www.outdoors.org)

#### **Appalachian Trail Conservancy**

603-795-4935; [jthorn@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:jthorn@appalachiantrail.org); [www.appalachiantrail.org](http://www.appalachiantrail.org)

#### **The Wilderness Society**

207-626-5553; [jeremy\\_sheaffer@tw.s.org](mailto:jeremy_sheaffer@tw.s.org); [www.wilderness.org](http://www.wilderness.org)

For more information on the Mahoosuc Initiative, please visit [www.mahoosucinfo.org](http://www.mahoosucinfo.org)

## The Mahoosuc Initiative: Goals and Background

Thank you for your interest in the Mahoosuc Initiative and our Mahoosuc Region Resources Report. The Mahoosuc Initiative is a new partnership in our region between local groups who know and love this place and regional groups who share our interest in the Mahoosucs and can bring resources to help empower local leadership.

### *A Region in Transition*

There have been significant changes in the Mahoosuc region over recent decades that are familiar to everyone living here. Dramatic shifts in land ownership, our forest-based economy, tourism, and other cornerstones of life in the Mahoosucs have created some challenges to our traditional way of life but also real opportunities.

### *Our Goals*

The Mahoosuc Report is intended to spark dialogue about the future of the Mahoosuc region among all local, state, and regional stakeholders. We hope that plans of action will emerge from these conversations to conserve the rugged beauty of the Mahoosuc region as well its traditions of forestry, hunting, fishing, recreation, hiking and solitude. Please join the conversation!



*Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge*

Jim Mitchell  
Mahoosuc Land Trust

Ferg Lea  
Androscoggin River Watershed Council

Larry Kelly  
Tri-County CAP

## *Why the Mahoosucs? Our National Treasure and Treasured Home*

The Mahoosuc region is a national treasure of unique natural resources and world-class recreational opportunities. It is also a home base treasured by local residents that remains tied to the land through its forest-based economy and culture. For these reasons and more, the Mahoosuc region is worthy of significant attention and investment.



*Where Wildlife Roams*

*Where Mountains and Rivers Overwhelm the Senses*

*Where People Are Still Connected*

*Where Forestry Remains Strong*

# Mahoosuc Report: A Platform for Community Dialogue

The Mahoosuc Report is a tool to inform community dialogue in this time of regional transition. The report is divided into two volumes. Volume I examines shifts in economy, land use, and demographics that are changing the Mahoosuc region. Volume II contains a toolbox of strategies for economic development, land conservation, and natural resource management that Mahoosuc communities can use to shape their future.

## How this Report Was Developed

The Mahoosuc Report was funded by the Mahoosuc Initiative and authored by local conservation professionals Marcel Polak – Spruce Mountain Realty Buyer Broker, Jim List – Community Science Network, and Kirk G. Siegel, Esq./Caribou Recreation Development, LLC. The Mahoosuc Initiative partner organizations contributed research, technical expertise, and outreach to support the development of the report. Community members helped by providing local knowledge and completing Participatory Geographic Information Systems Maps indicating their areas of greatest interest.

## How this Report Will Be Used

We plan to convene a series of community conversations around the Mahoosuc Report. This will include “kitchen table” meetings in each community and larger public forums targeted at groups of communities. Our long-term goal is to support whatever community direction and interest that emerges from these conversations. We encourage your participation!



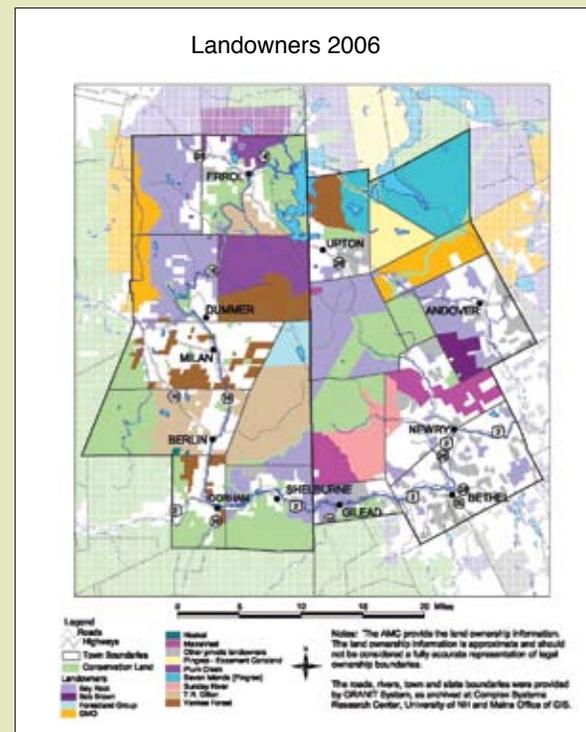
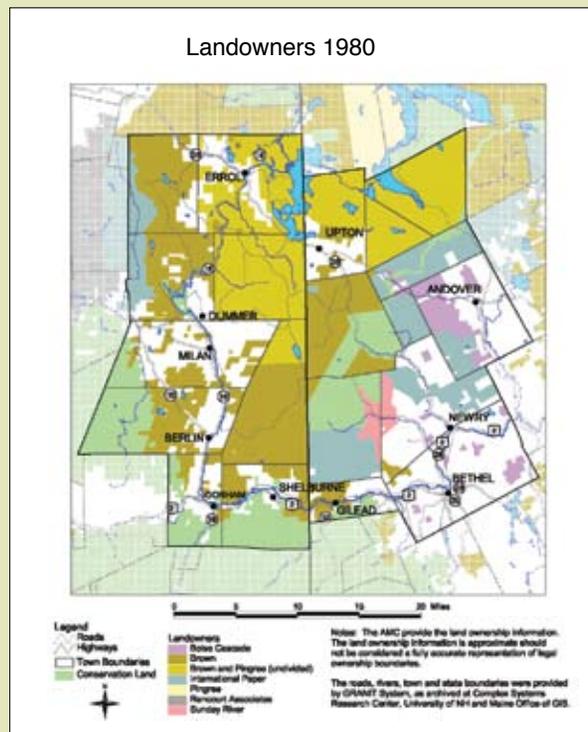
Top photo: Andover Old Home Days  
Bottom photo: Mahoosuc Initiative Meeting, Berlin, NH

# Mahoosuc Report Highlight: Land Ownership Is Changing!

One of the most notable findings of the Mahoosuc Report is that since 1980, the vast majority of large timberland parcels have been sold at least once and many parcels more than once. The result is that Mahoosuc land is now much more scattered among diverse owners with wide ranging ownership goals. The maps below show this dramatic transition.

Based on other findings in the report about rising development pressure in the Mahoosuc region, continued land sales on this scale could lead to loss of public access and reduced opportunities for timber harvest. This threatens to change the region's traditional economy and outdoor recreation opportunities.

## Mahoosuc Region Landownership Shifts 1980-2006

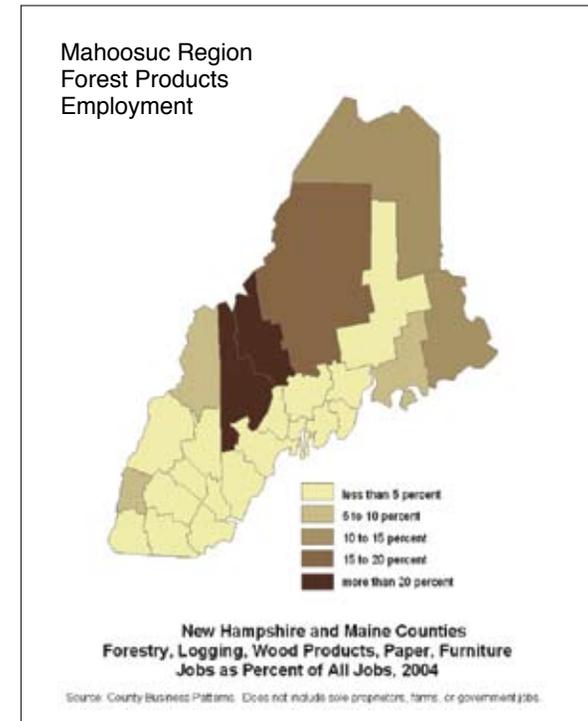


## Mahoosuc Report Highlight: Forest Products Industry Feels Regional and Global Trends

The Mahoosuc Report found that the region's loss of forest products industry jobs and businesses in recent years is part of larger shifts in the national and global forest products economy. However, the Mahoosuc region's forest products economy is faring better than most. The region's highly productive forests and remaining value-added processing businesses have kept the Mahoosuc region as one of the top areas in the entire Northern Forest for forest-based economic activity. Timber harvest has increased in Coos County in recent years and remained relatively constant in Oxford County.

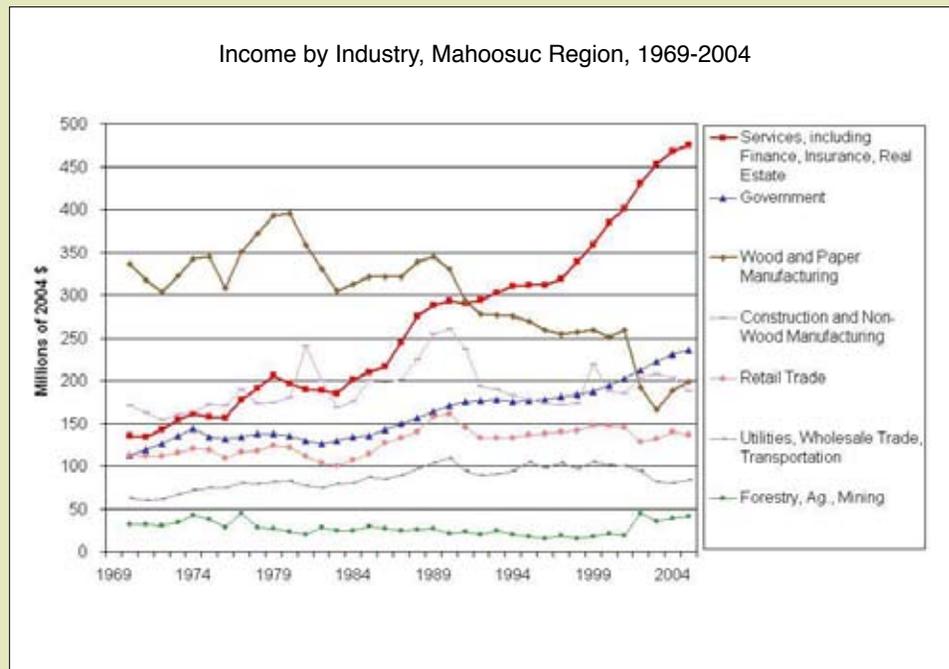
### Case Study: Hancock Lumber, Bethel

This successful forest products business is showing the way for others in the Mahoosuc region. Hancock Lumber is tops in the nation for eastern white pine, sawing 42 million board feet each year. Ninety percent of that is sold as finished products, such as millwork and paneling. To help stay efficient and economically competitive, Hancock is about to make a major investment in renewable biomass energy that will turn the mill's waste into steam heat for its kilns. This will save 400,000 gallons of oil per year! Hancock also plans to add a turbine that will produce half of the electricity to run the mill.



## Mahoosuc Report Highlight: *Diversifying Economy Has Brought New Strengths*

Like much of Maine and New Hampshire, the Mahoosuc region has seen very positive growth in service-related economic activity since 1969. In the Maine portion of the Mahoosucs, tourism-related economic activity has roughly doubled. In the New Hampshire portion of the Mahoosucs, a diversifying economy has helped keep unemployment under 5 percent in all but one of the Mahoosuc towns. The table below shows how the region's economic drivers have shifted since 1969.



*In the Maine portion of the Mahoosucs, tourism-related economic activity has roughly doubled.*

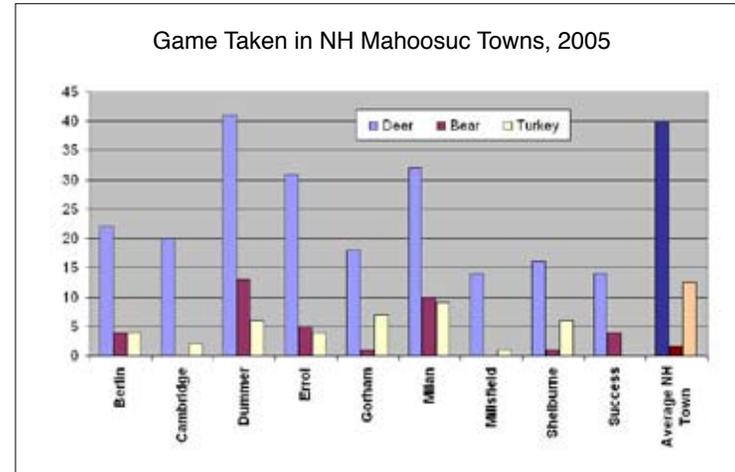
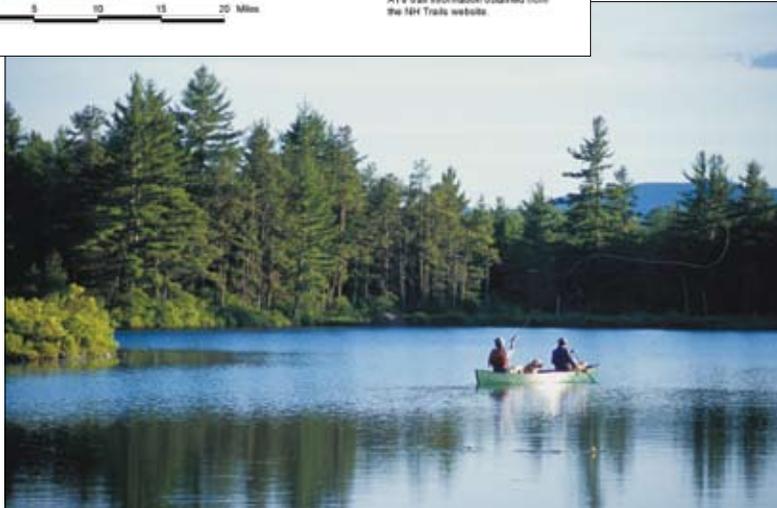
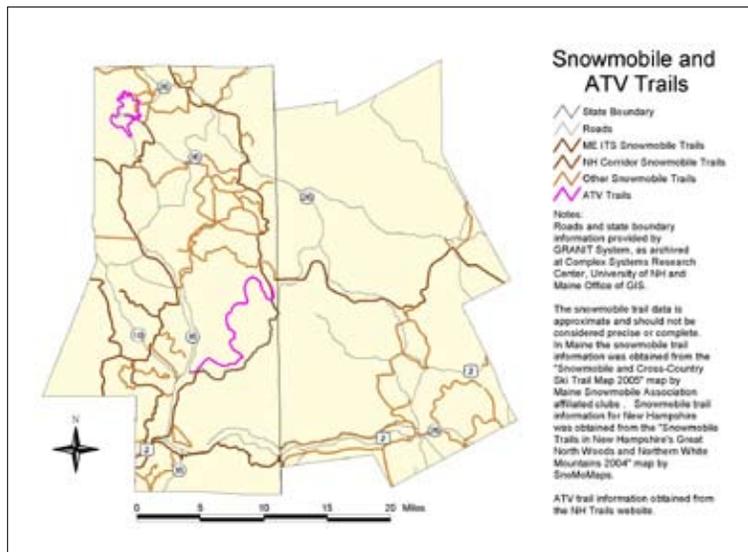
### Case Study: LL Cote Sports Center, Errol

LL Cote Sports Center, owned by Luke Cote, is a strong example of how tourism can help boost the region's economy. Cote has owned the Sports Center for more than 20 years. It is the largest business in Errol and employs 26 full-time and 4 part-time employees. The Sports Center has an overwhelming array of gear for the outdoor enthusiasts who flock to the region, from hunters to hikers. Cote noted in the Mahoosuc Report that there is a real need to continue improving the region's amenities and infrastructure to draw tourists.



# Mahoosuc Report Highlight: *Outdoor Recreation Is Unique Regional Asset*

The Mahoosuc Report assessed the recreational opportunities in the region and found that the skiing, hiking, fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, and other activities available are known and prized far beyond regional boundaries. Mahoosuc Notch is famed among the hiking community as the “toughest mile” of the entire 2,100 mile Appalachian Trail. Sunday River Ski Area is one of New England’s most popular resorts. The scenic beauty of the mountains, pure waters for swimming and fishing, abundant hunting opportunities, and easy public access for motorized and non-motorized recreation all draw visitors and dollars to the Mahoosuc region.



# Mahoosuc Report Highlight: Region Holds Important Wildlife and Natural Resources

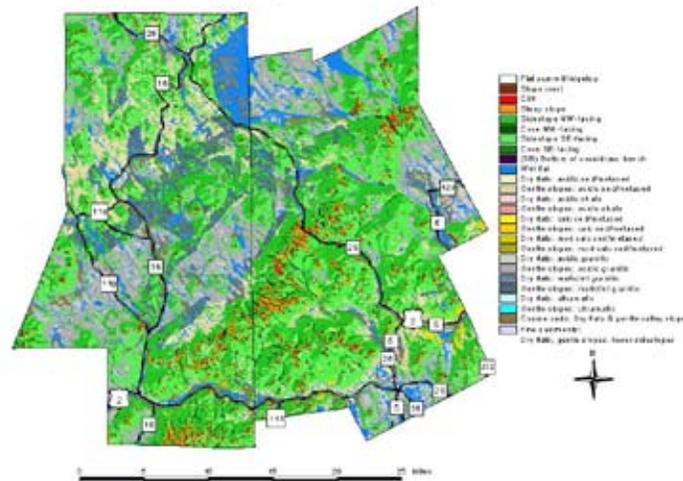
The Mahoosuc Report also assessed the wildlife, waters, soils, and other natural assets in the Mahoosuc region. On all fronts, the Mahoosuc region emerged as an area of unusual natural significance. The region is home to strong populations of game and non-game species, six rare plant communities, the headwaters of the Androscoggin River and many other important waterways, and highly productive and diverse forest soils. The maps below highlight the region's unique significance for water resources and its diversity of habitats and natural communities.

## Mahoosuc Region Headwaters and Habitats

Watersheds of the Mahoosuc Region



Ecological Land Units of the Mahoosuc Region  
(developed by the Nature Conservancy)



### Case Study: High Elevation Wetlands

The Cottongrass-Heath-Alpine Bog Community is an example of the Mahoosuc region's unique natural richness. Only here in these rare wetland areas above 2900' elevation does the extremely rare northern bog lemming (pictured at right) find habitat. The Mahoosucs contain one of Maine's few remaining pockets of this habitat, while five of New Hampshire's fourteen examples are in the Mahoosucs. Few areas of the country have such diverse natural wealth.



Mark McCollough

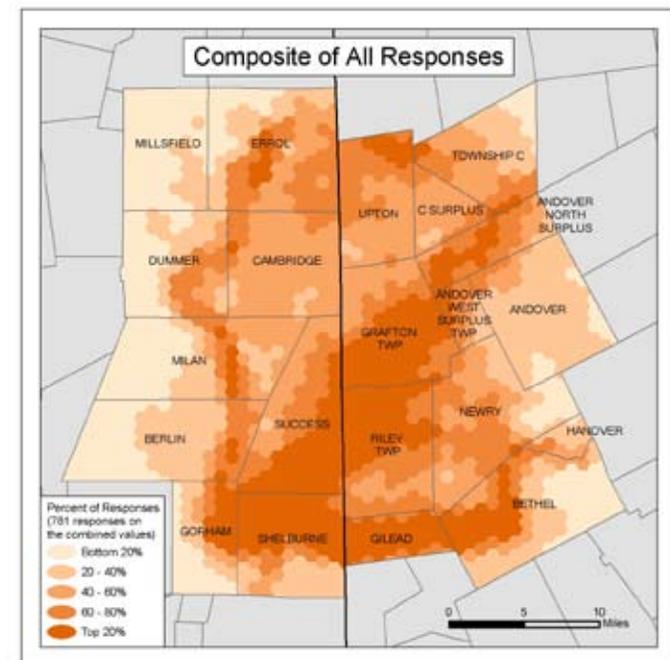
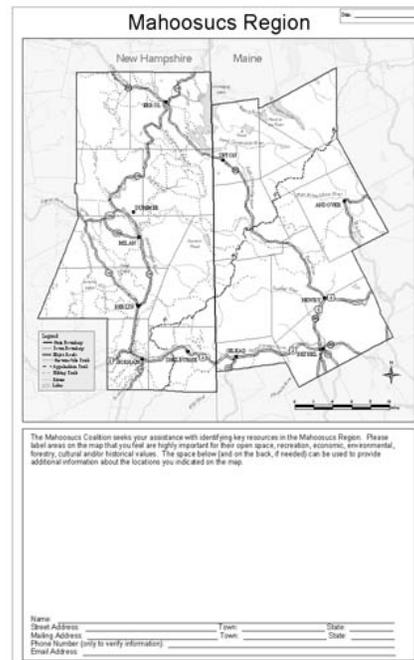
## Taking Action: Mahoosuc Report Highlights Tools for Community Leadership

Volume II of the Mahoosuc Report identifies a range of new leadership opportunities for Mahoosuc communities. One byproduct of the rapid changes in the region is the feeling among some local residents that they are powerless to shape the future. Many residents have expressed fear about the loss of traditional uses of the land, from timber harvest to hunting and other recreation. The strategies identified in Volume II have the potential to put local communities more in control of future changes and better prepared to conserve their economies, culture, and way of life.

### Community Leadership Tool: Participatory GIS

Participatory GIS is a tool that enables community members to map the places that they value most and to identify the values they most want to be conserved. The maps below are the blank map distributed to community members (left) and composite result of responses (right) from an initial test run. Based on our experimental efforts, we think participatory GIS mapping can be a valuable tool for Mahoosuc communities to prioritize conservation efforts by identifying important timber supply areas and other key features.

### Mahoosuc Region Participatory GIS Maps



## Community Leadership Tool: *Forest Utilization and Marketing*

Although the forest products industry has seen some turbulence in recent decades, the Mahoosuc region's forests remain an invaluable economic asset. Innovative utilization and marketing strategies can help forest owners and businesses maximize their economic opportunities. Utilization projects can help find markets for low grade wood, such as the increased movement toward biomass energy, and innovative marketing can help producers reach new consumers. Recent marketing successes include the Sugarwood Gallery established through the efforts of Maine Woodnet and The Wilderness Society and the growing demand for certified wood.



### Case Study: Biomass Energy

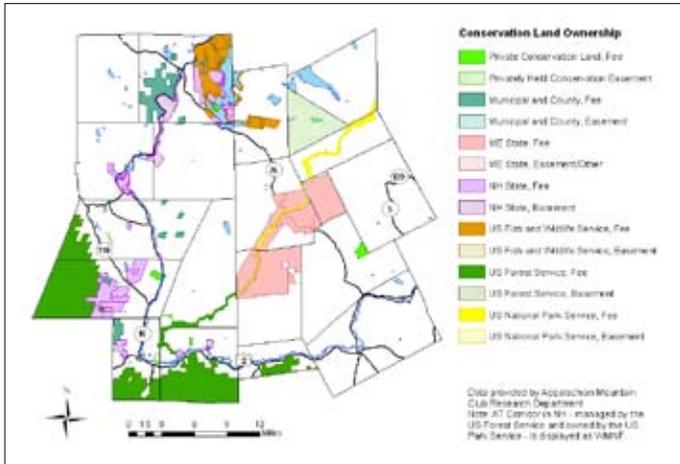
As the nation confronts the challenges of changing climate and tightening energy supplies, local and renewable energy will be at a premium. If managed correctly, the Mahoosuc region's forests could help fill this need by producing biomass energy at various scales. As profiled above, businesses like Hancock Lumber are using biomass energy from waste products to lower fuel costs. Schools across the Northern Forest are also adopting biomass energy heating systems under "Fuels for Schools" initiatives. There is even movement afoot to develop large-scale biomass facilities, including efforts to build a 50 MW wood burning electric facility in Berlin. If the region can maximize biomass energy, it will provide a competitive advantage over other regions and enhance the security of local communities.

# Community Leadership Tool: Land Conservation

Land conservation projects can help shape the future that local residents desire by protecting key parcels from development. These lands provide anchors for smart growth. Conservation projects typically target lands with unique value for forestry, wildlife, water supplies, recreation, and other public values. Volume II of the Mahoosuc Report describes diverse conservation strategies, from conservation easements on private lands to new areas of public ownership. There is particular interest across the Mahoosucs in the potential for new community-owned forests – this topic is covered in detail.

## Mahoosuc Region Conservation Lands

## Grafton Notch Forest Legacy Projects



### Case Study: Grafton Notch

Standing high on Old Speck and looking down into Grafton Notch is one of the recreational highlights of the Mahoosuc region. In 2005, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) began working with the owners of a 3,600-acre private parcel right below Old Speck to add this missing puzzle piece to the State's lands in Grafton Notch. Thanks to the work of TPL, the State, and the many local supporters of the project, the federal government recently awarded \$2 million dollars from the Forest Legacy Program to help fund this purchase. This State acquisition will permanently guarantee public recreation access, keep popular snowmobile trails open, enable addition of nine miles of the Grafton Loop Trail, and continue forestry operations. TPL is currently working on a second phase to conserve the adjacent 3,400 acre Stowe Mountain parcel.

# Community Leadership Tool: *Wildlife Management and Conservation*

One of the most prized assets of the Mahoosuc region is its abundant and diverse wildlife. The region is also renowned for its fisheries. As hunters, anglers, and trappers know well, sustaining abundant wildlife requires hands-on conservation, from managing habitat to tracking and maintaining wildlife populations. The Mahoosuc Report discusses the many opportunities available for Mahoosuc communities to help manage and conserve wildlife.

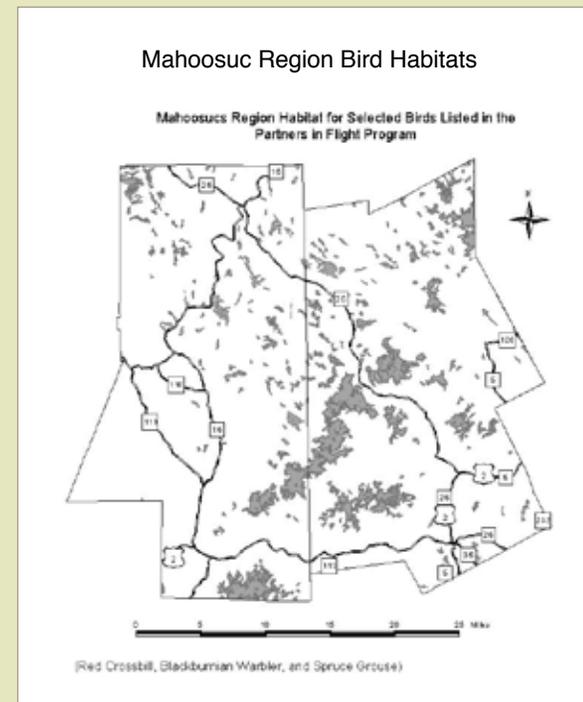
## Case Study: State Wildlife Plan

In October of 2006, every state in the nation had a homework assignment due: a federally-required State Wildlife Plan. Maine and New Hampshire have both completed these comprehensive plans, which call for renewed efforts to protect important habitats and improve all aspects of wildlife management. Importantly, these new State Wildlife Plans reinforce that wildlife conservation starts at home with hands-on local efforts to enhance wildlife habitat on one's property or

in one's town. The Mahoosuc Report gives specific contacts to help you participate in this effort at any level.



Gregory Crough



## The Mahoosuc Initiative: *Sharing Our Story*

This publication is meant to give a flavor for the Mahoosuc Region Resources Report, but does not begin to capture its entire breadth of information and new strategies. Instead, we hope to use this document to capture community interest and spawn new collaborations for action. The full report can be found in the public library and town hall of every town in the Mahoosuc region and is also available for free download on the Internet at our Mahoosuc Initiative website: [www.mahoosucinfo.org](http://www.mahoosucinfo.org).

### *Next Steps for the Mahoosuc Initiative*

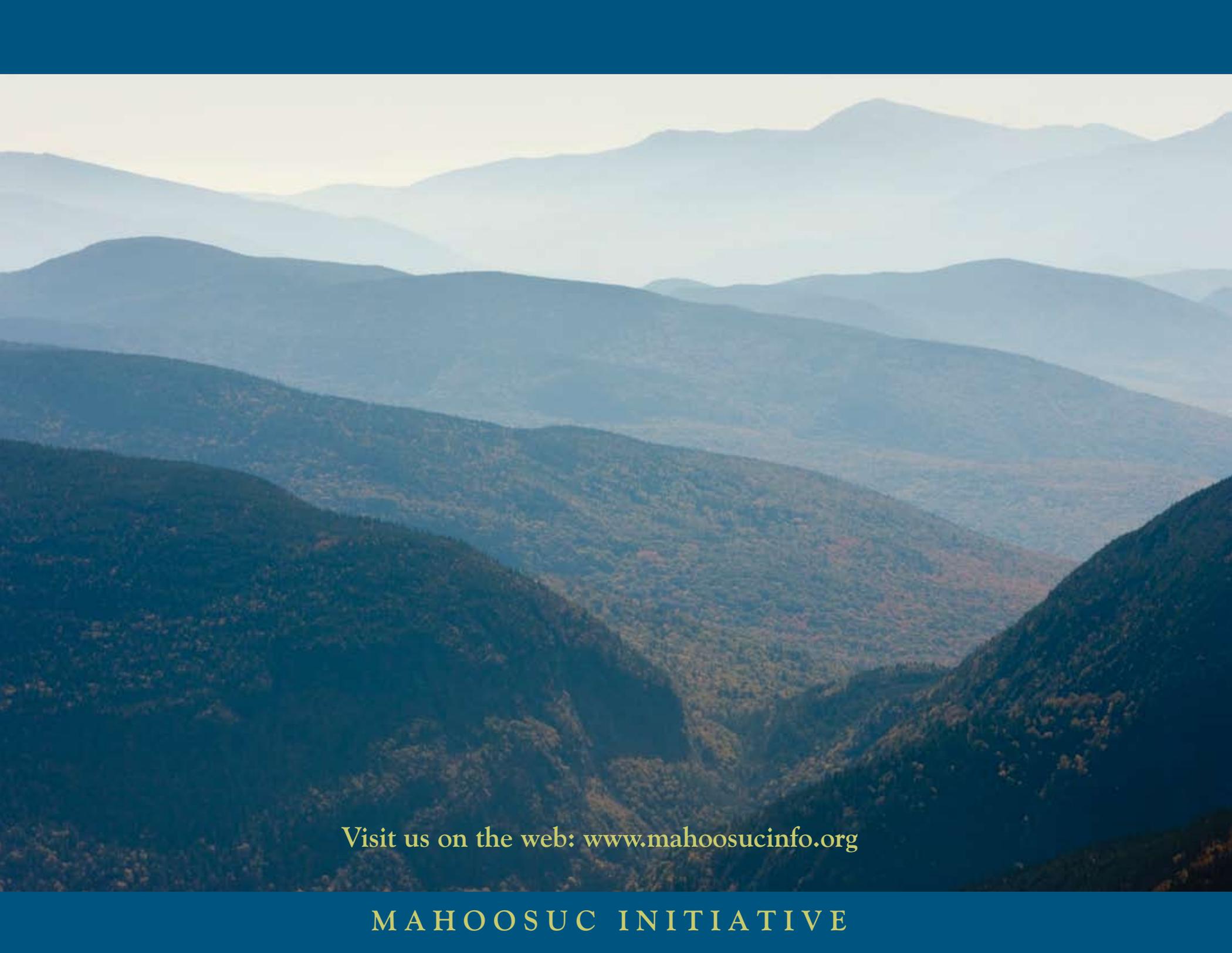
The Mahoosuc Initiative hopes to act as a catalyst for community leadership in the Mahoosuc region. This will include sparking and informing community conversations, providing research and other technical assistance, and helping to find new financial backing for Mahoosuc projects from federal, state, and private funding sources. Please contact any of our partners for more information or to get more involved.

### *Claiming a Bright Future*

Given its immense natural wealth and social capital, the Mahoosuc region is well poised to grow and prosper during this time of transition. Like an upwelling in the ocean or tilling of soil, this time of change also brings new opportunities. The Mahoosuc Initiative looks forward to helping Mahoosuc communities find these opportunities to shape a bright future.



*View from Caribou Mountain*



Visit us on the web: [www.mahoosucinfo.org](http://www.mahoosucinfo.org)

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