

Vision

The Center envisions a thriving and welcoming Northern Forest region sustained by innovation and environmental stewardship.



Mission

We create bold possibilities that give rise to vibrant Northern Forest communities.



Maine West is a partnership of local and regional organizations working across the economic, education, health and conservation sectors to position rural western Maine communities as viable and attractive places to live, work, do business, and raise families.

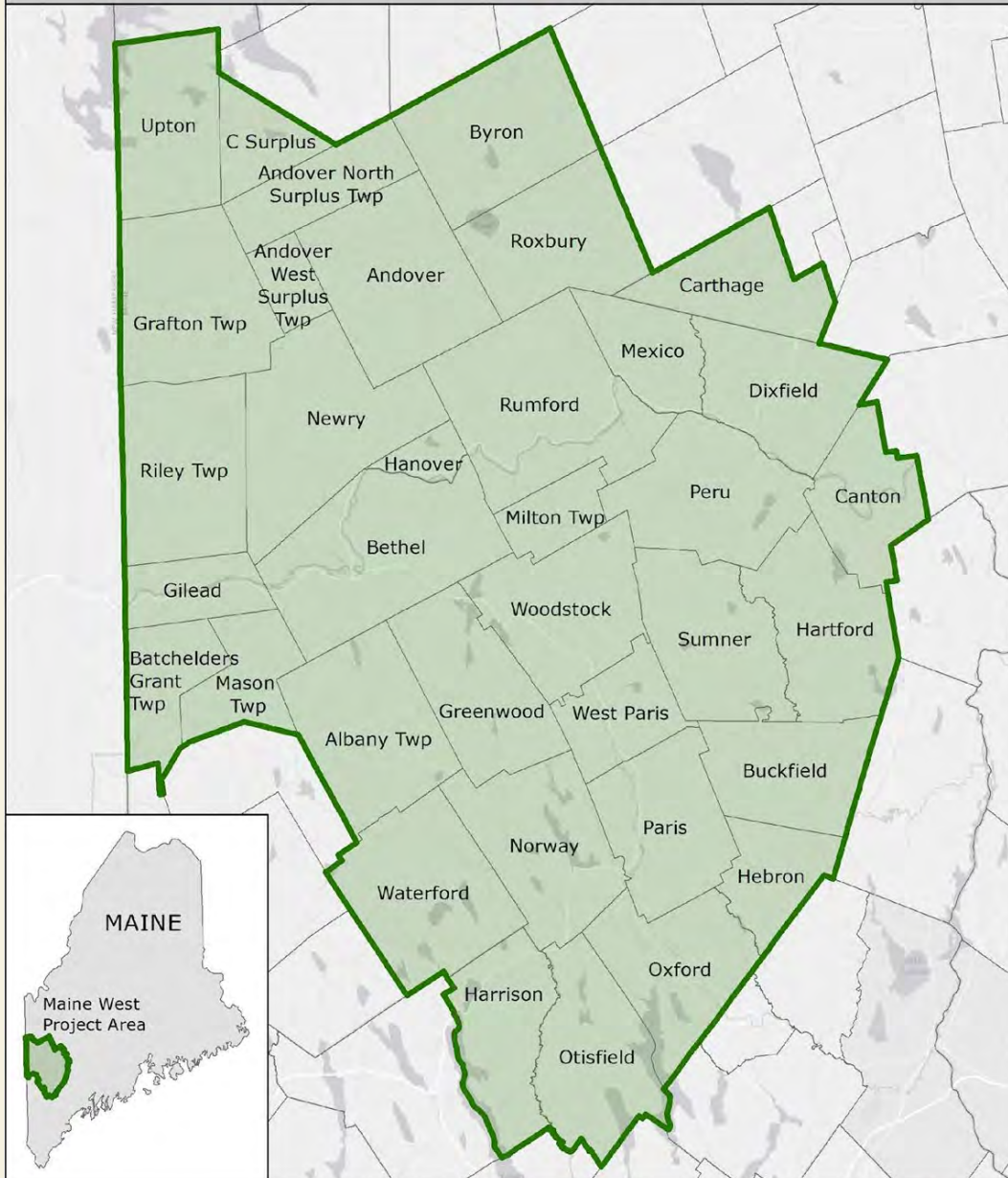
Initiated by the Betterment Fund in 2015 to build on the success of collaborative land conservation efforts.

Maine West Partner Organizations



Maine West Project Area

This concept map is for discussion purposes only.



Maine West Program Areas

- Broadband Access & Adoption
- Educational Aspirations & Attainment
- Active Communities
 - Land and Trails
 - Getting People Outside

□ Maine West Project Area

0 5 Miles

Prepared for Mahoosuc Pathways by
Center for Community GIS, May 2016

M Mahoosuc
Pathways

Active Communities

Program Goals:

- Improve local health outcomes
- Encourage youth and school groups to get outside and exercise
- Connect people with local conservation lands
- Position rural communities as attractive places to live and raise families.

Program Activities

- Land and Trails
- Getting People Outside



Bethel Community Forest, Photo Courtesy of Jerry Monkman, TPL

Second Nature Adventure Challenge

Outdoor recreation challenge to encourage healthy physical activity and connection with the outdoors – designed to enable people to “give back when you get outside.”

- Summer 2023 – 1,200 participants in 400 activities
- Top 10 Locations all managed by Maine West conservation partners
- \$4,500 contributed to local food banks (who were involved promoting the program to their beneficiaries)

\$25,000 contributed to local food pantries and after school programs that get kids outside in nature



Outings for Older Adults

Reduce barriers to outdoor recreation for older adults who feel isolated, disconnected and lonely – who want to exercise in the outdoors but are nervous about being alone and/or hurting themselves.

- Regular schedule
- Peer group support
- Equipment – walking poles, whistles
- Age range from 57-83



Falcon Camp – Outings for Youth

Deliver physical and mental health benefits of physical activity with others in the outdoors to youth who don't otherwise have access – especially students who may be experiencing other challenges or risks.

- Experienced leaders
- Skills training – biking, hiking, paddling
- Group and overnight experiences
- Experiences in the Maine West region and beyond
- Continued engagement through school year

“I was not sure if the students he selected would buy in, but I was happily wrong! The experiences that group of students received in the summer have had a long-lasting impact and I truly believe we are seeing the benefits during the school year.”

- Tom Danylik, Principle, Mountain Valley High School



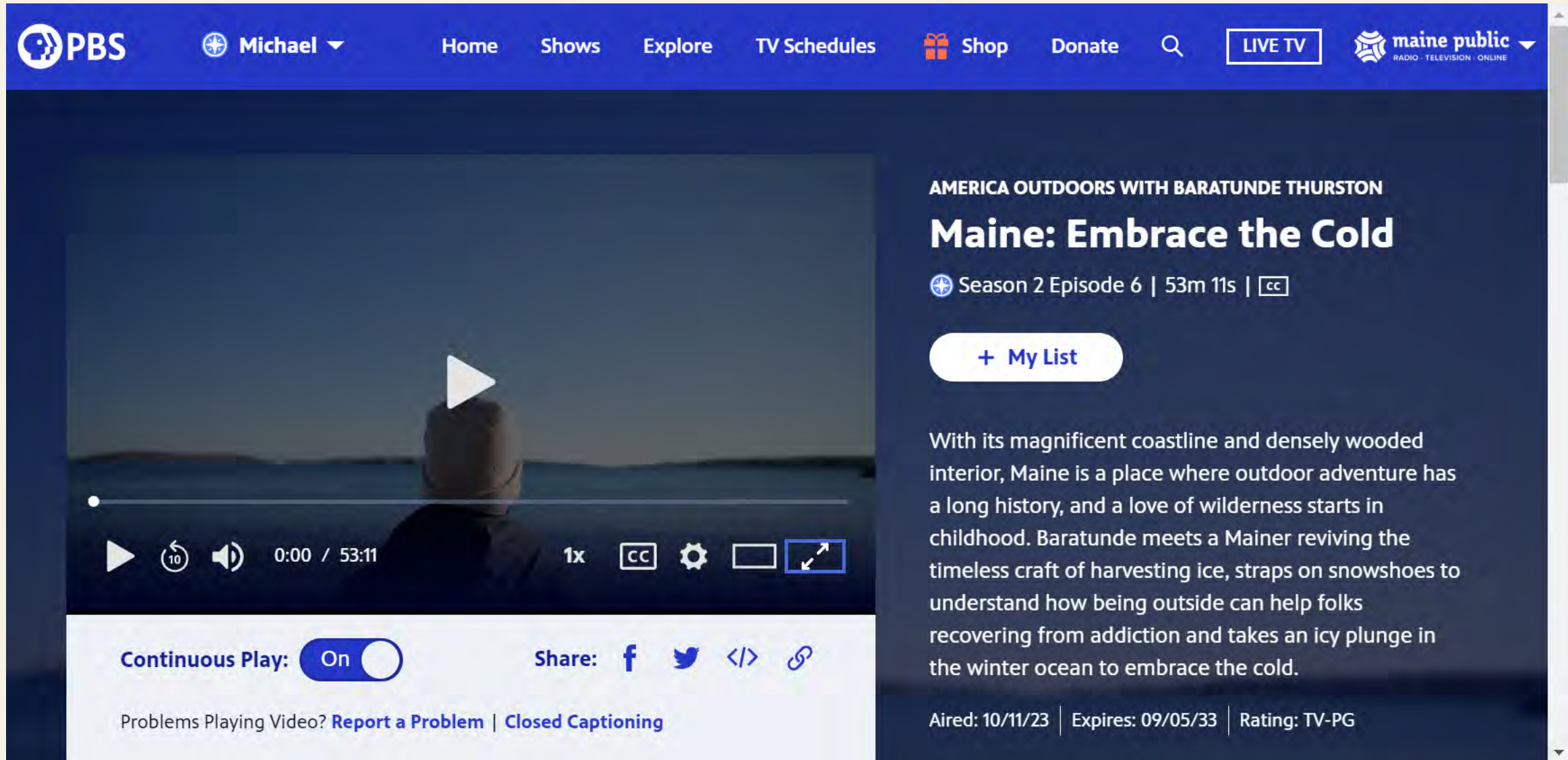
Recovery Outings

Support people managing substance use disorder by helping them connect with others in nature – reduce barriers of limited experience, resources, and organized/supported activities.

- Partnership with groups in the recovery community – Western Maine Addiction Recovery Initiative, Larry Labonte Recovery Center
- Year-long calendar of events – hiking, fishing, paddling, skiing, snowshoeing
- Provide gear and equipment (to keep)
- Experienced peer support is critical



Recovery Outings



The screenshot shows the PBS website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the PBS logo, a user profile for 'Michael', and links for Home, Shows, Explore, TV Schedules, Shop, Donate, and LIVE TV. The main content area features a video player for the episode 'Maine: Embrace the Cold' from the series 'AMERICA OUTDOORS WITH BARATUNDE THURSTON'. The video player includes a play button, a progress bar, and various control icons like volume, speed, and closed captions. Below the video player, there are options for 'Continuous Play' (set to 'On') and 'Share' links for Facebook, Twitter, and a generic share icon. A troubleshooting link 'Problems Playing Video? Report a Problem | Closed Captioning' is also present. To the right of the video player, the episode title 'Maine: Embrace the Cold' is displayed in large white text, followed by 'Season 2 Episode 6 | 53m 11s | CC'. A '+ My List' button is located below the episode information. A descriptive paragraph follows, stating: 'With its magnificent coastline and densely wooded interior, Maine is a place where outdoor adventure has a long history, and a love of wilderness starts in childhood. Baratunde meets a Mainer reviving the timeless craft of harvesting ice, straps on snowshoes to understand how being outside can help folks recovering from addiction and takes an icy plunge in the winter ocean to embrace the cold.' At the bottom right, the airing information is shown: 'Aired: 10/11/23 | Expires: 09/05/33 | Rating: TV-PG'.

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AMERICA OUTDOORS WITH BARATUNDE THURSTON

Maine: Embrace the Cold

Season 2 Episode 6 | 53m 11s | CC

+ My List

With its magnificent coastline and densely wooded interior, Maine is a place where outdoor adventure has a long history, and a love of wilderness starts in childhood. Baratunde meets a Mainer reviving the timeless craft of harvesting ice, straps on snowshoes to understand how being outside can help folks recovering from addiction and takes an icy plunge in the winter ocean to embrace the cold.

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Continuous Play: On Share: [f](#) [t](#) [</>](#) [link](#)

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Maine West



**Active Communities –
Connecting Conservation and
Community**

**If you build it...
they may still may not come.**

- Connect with experienced community partners
- Don't assume comfort and experience
- Address specific barriers – safety, gear, support
- Be consistent – and patient

Thank you!