



**RURAL HOUSING, CLIMATE FORESTRY, AND  
COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT:  
THREE-DIMENSIONS OF A WIN FOR RURAL  
NEW ENGLAND**

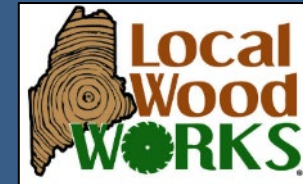


# DISCUSSION OVERVIEW

- An Overview of the Triple Win Collaboration
- Rural Housing Needs & the Case for Smart Growth
- Leaning Into the Discussion: The Role of the Conservation Community in Housing Development
- Tying Sustainable Resources to Growing Needs: Climate Smart Forestry, Local Wood, and Housing
- Q&A and Open Dialogue

# THE TRIPLE WIN COLLABORATION: THE TEAM

- New England Forestry Foundation
- GrowSmart Maine
- Kennebec Land Trust
- Local Wood WORKS
- The Nature Conservancy in Maine
- Massachusetts Woodlands Institute
- Zero Energy Homes



# THE TRIPLE WIN COLLABORATION: STARTING WITH VISION



2023 Local Wood WORKS Roundtable



A Maine partnership established in 2013 with the goal of advancing forest-based local economies and supporting long-term conservation and sustainability of Maine's forestlands.

**Eight Partner Organizations:** Kennebec Land Trust, Maine Forest Service, Coastal Enterprises Inc., Maine Coast Heritage Trust, The Nature Conservancy, GrowSmart Maine, Northern Forest Center, and Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association

LWW expanded its collaborative efforts to include affordable housing development in Fall 2023, starting with its **Affordable Housing + Local Sourcing Tour**



# THE TRIPLE WIN COLLABORATION: INTERSECTIONAL CHALLENGES & SHARED OPPORTUNITIES

## Challenges

- Conservation & Housing Development
  - Overlapping challenges in rural communities related to contracting forest economies and housing availability
  - Continued imbalances between regional preservation, active management, and wood consumption
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# THE TRIPLE WIN COLLABORATION: INTERSECTIONAL CHALLENGES & SHARED OPPORTUNITIES

## Challenges

- Conservation & Housing Development
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## Opportunities

- Engage conservation organizations and climate planners in discussions about community housing needs
- Adopt integrated regional planning and active sustainable forest management goals in climate action plans
- Expand the production and use of high-value local and regional wood products in housing, fostering rural economic growth and community development



## THE TRIPLE WIN COLLABORATION: DRAWING INSIGHTS FROM MAINE

- Maine's diverse housing needs, spanning rural, suburban, and urban areas, make it an ideal case study for examining housing issues across New England.
- Maine's diverse forestry sector, with corporate-owned forests in the north, family-owned forests in the center, and urban development in the south, mirrors New England's overall forestry dynamics.
- Maine's conservation land trusts are exploring their role in community housing, with some leading in partnerships and others just starting, reflecting trends across New England.
- Maine's balance between local extraction and global sourcing highlights the broader tension in economies, with local processors offering insights into the benefits and challenges of local economies.



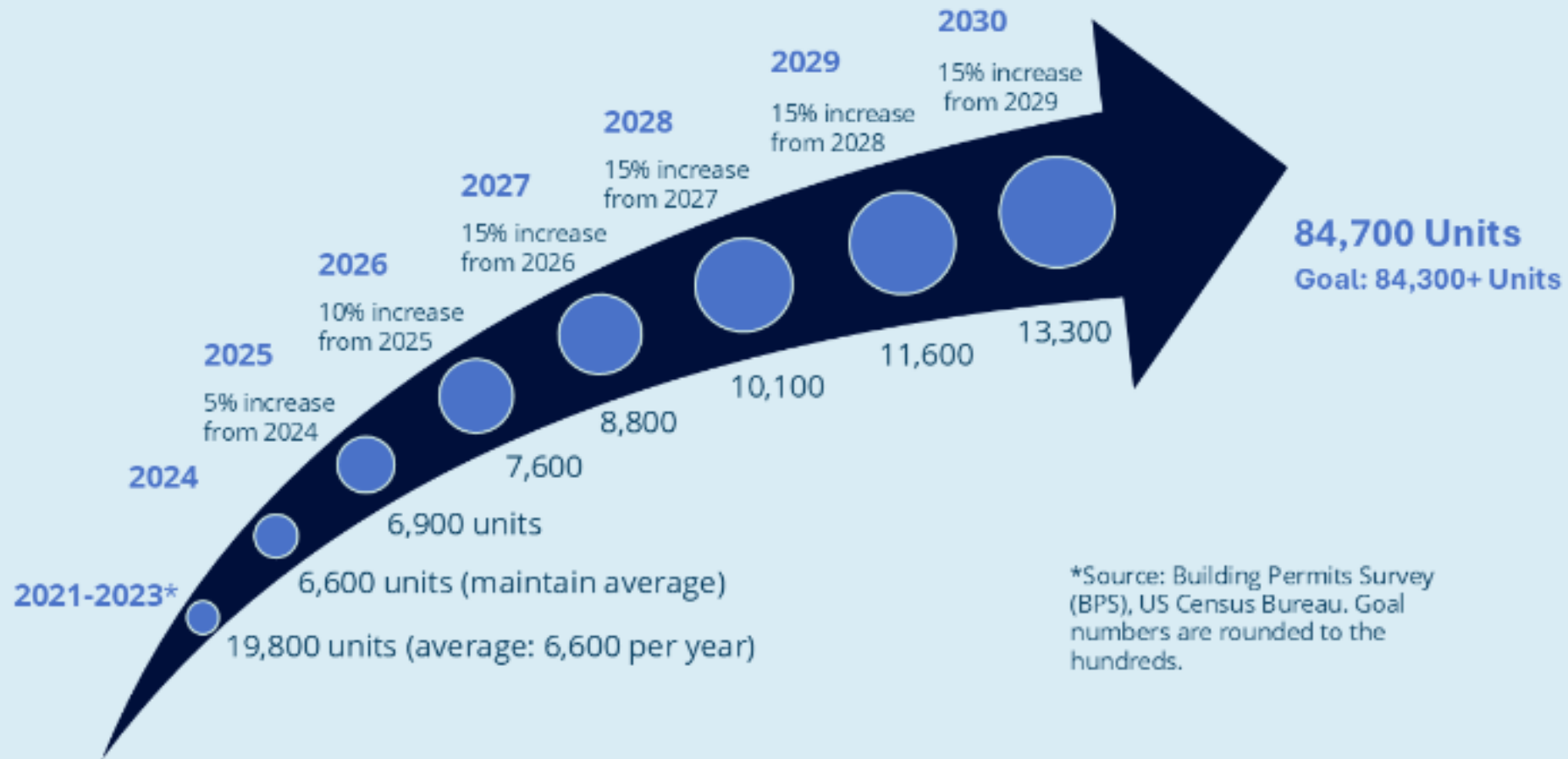


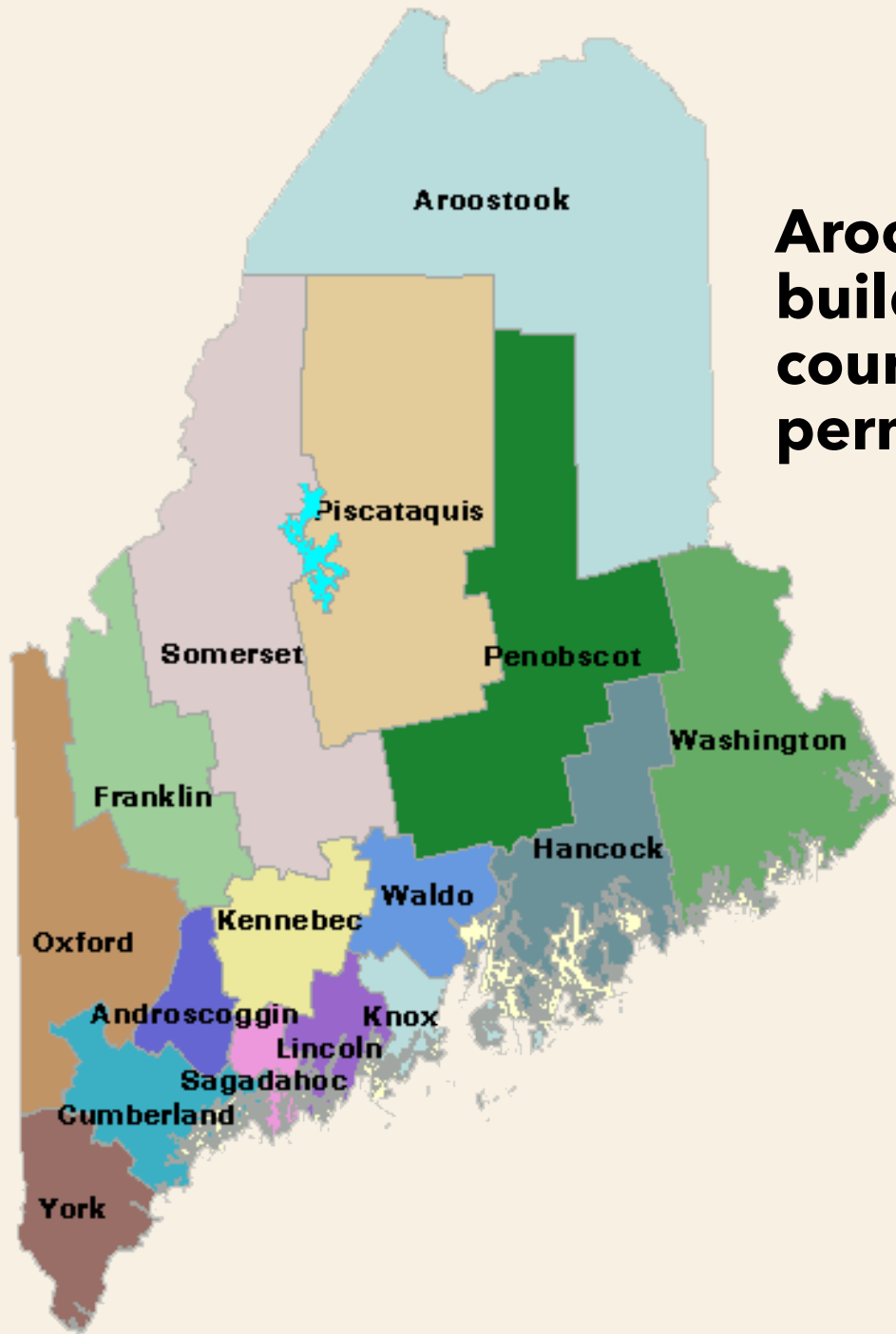
# RURAL HOUSING NEEDS & THE CASE FOR SMART GROWTH

Harald Bredesen, Program Director,  
GrowSmart Maine



# Statewide Housing Production Goal





**Aroostook County to issue 390 building permits annually over the course of the next 5 years, up from 90 permits.**

**Washington County to issue 830 building permits annually over the course of the next 5 years, up from 60 permits.**



# CHALLENGES

Barriers to development:

- high construction costs
- lack of financing options
- low capacity (municipal and developers/contractors)
- limited access to infrastructure (wastewater)

Impact on rural communities:

- driving up housing costs
- displacement of long-term residents
- challenges in attracting & retaining a workforce

**= Any housing is good housing?**





# HOUSING TYPES

- Affordable: Affordable housing refers to housing units that are financially accessible to low- and moderate-income households, typically costing no more than 30% of a household's gross income.
- Workforce housing: Workforce housing targets middle-income workers who do not qualify for traditional affordable housing subsidies. It is typically designed for individuals and families earning between 60% and 120% of the area median income (AMI).
- Missing middle housing: Missing middle housing refers to a range of housing types that fill the gap between single-family homes and large multifamily developments.



# SMART GROWTH

**“Housing development and conservation - two sides of the same coin.”**

Smart growth is a development approach that focuses on creating walkable, mixed-use communities with a variety of housing options and transportation choices. It aims to reduce sprawl, protect the environment, and improve the quality of life for residents.



# SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

- Mixing land uses
- Compact building design
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Preserving open space and farmland
- Directing development towards existing communities
- Providing a variety of transportation choices
- Making development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
- Encouraging community collaboration in development decisions



# STRATEGIES

- Promote “yes, and ... ” - holistic approach to local development and conservation.
- Engage in comprehensive planning and zoning processes at the municipal level.
  - Develop models and best practices for cooperation.
  - Develop and use tools that promote housing AND conservation - such as Limited Conservation Development.
- Promote the production and use of high-value local and regional wood products in housing, fostering rural economic growth and community development.
- Who are your partners? Create coalitions.
  - Developers, local champions, advocacy organizations, climate resiliency planners, community land trusts, land owners, state and regional economic development organizations, etc.



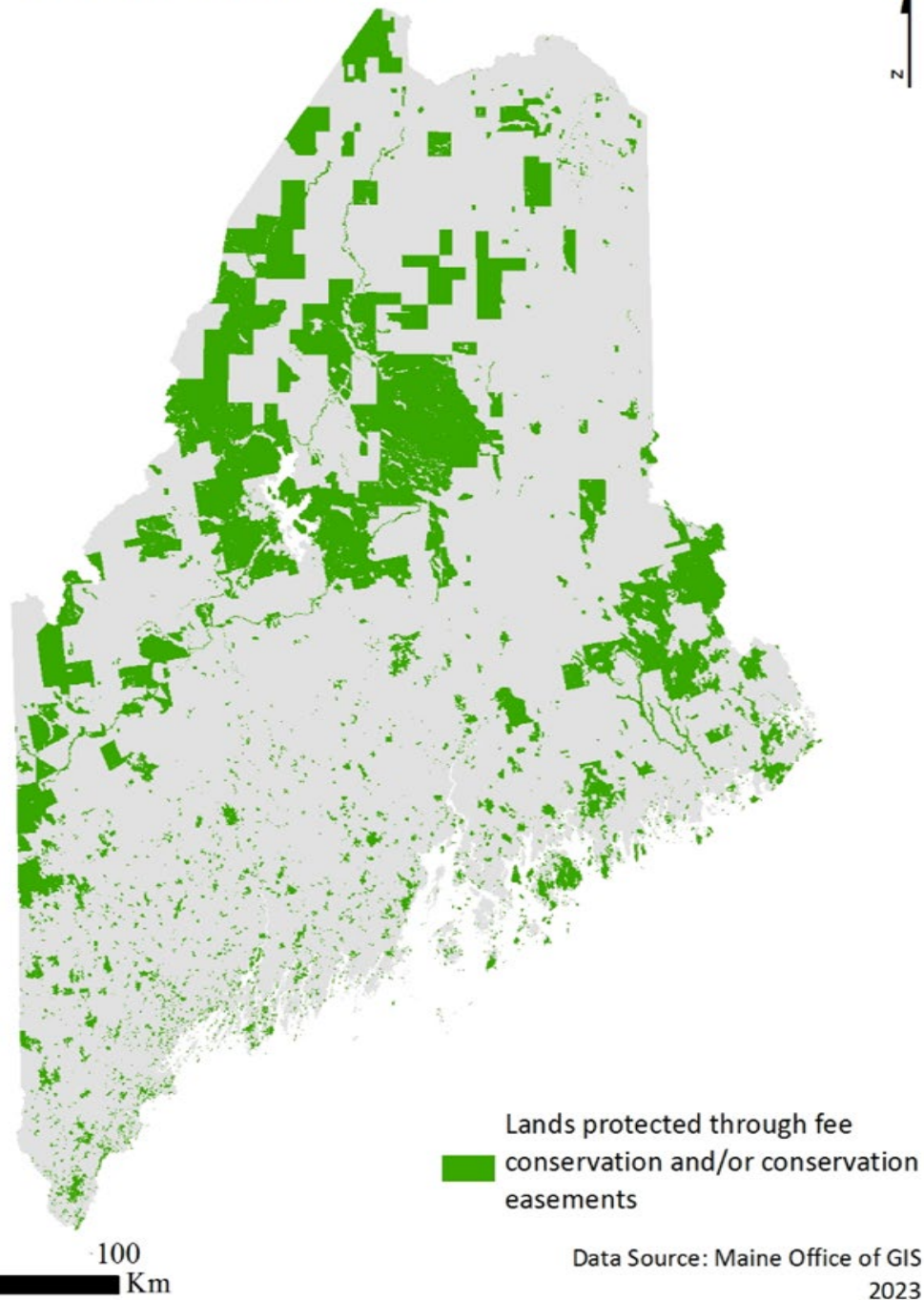


# THE ROLE OF THE CONSERVATION COMMUNITY IN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Theresa Kerchner, Executive Director,  
Kennebec Land Trust

Local Wood WORKS

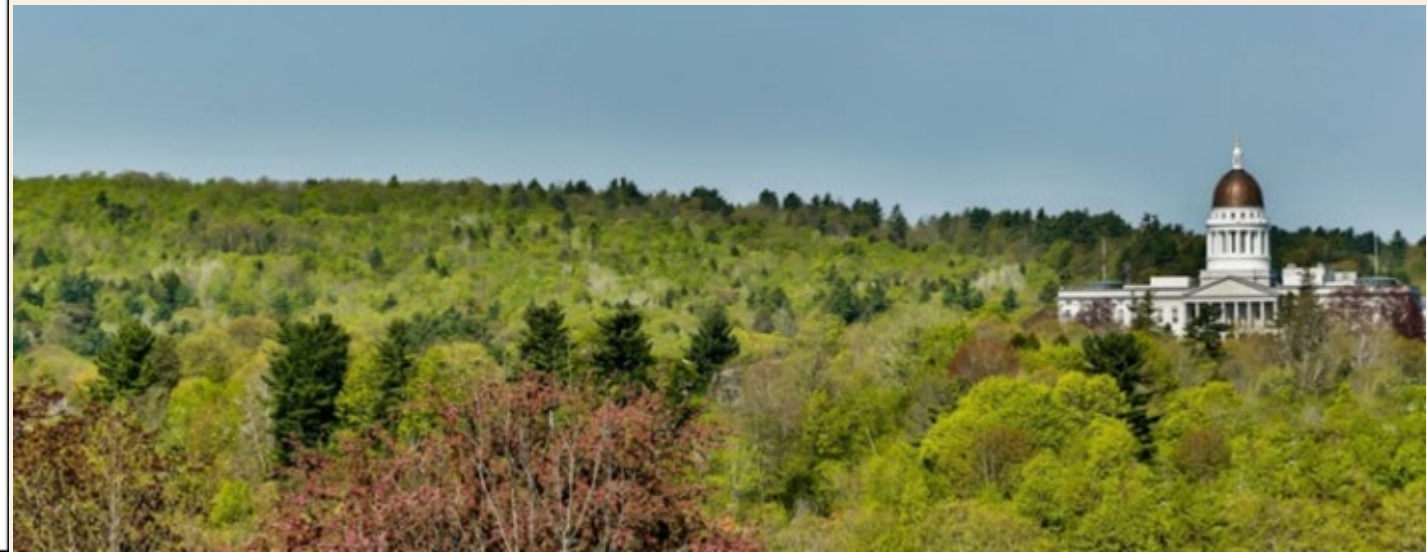
# Maine Conservation Lands



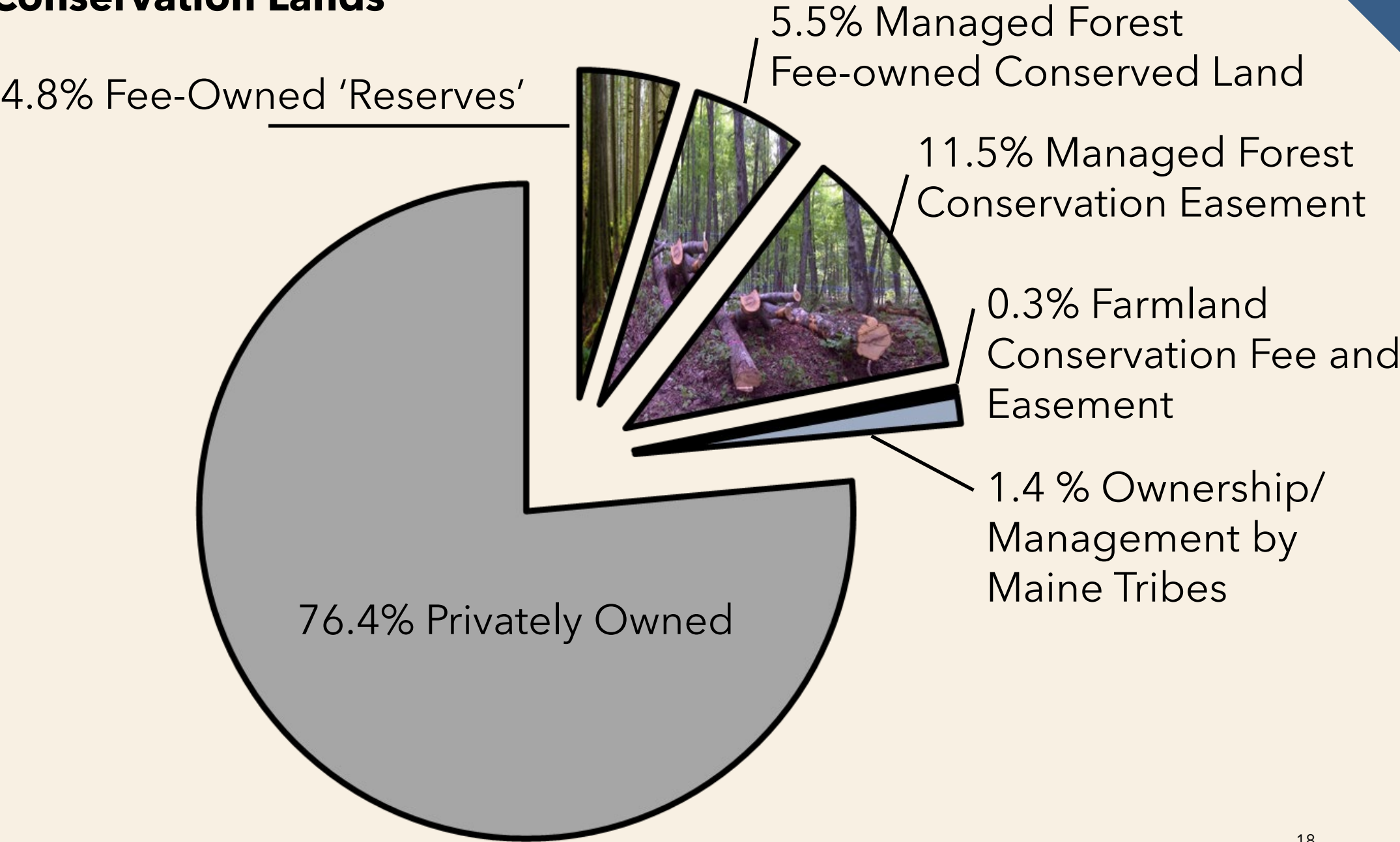
## Maine's Conservation Lands

- 4,416,922 acres Fee/Easement Conservation (22.2%)
- 270,300 acres owned by Maine Tribes (1.4%)

Data: 2023 Maine Natural Areas Program



# Maine's Conservation Lands





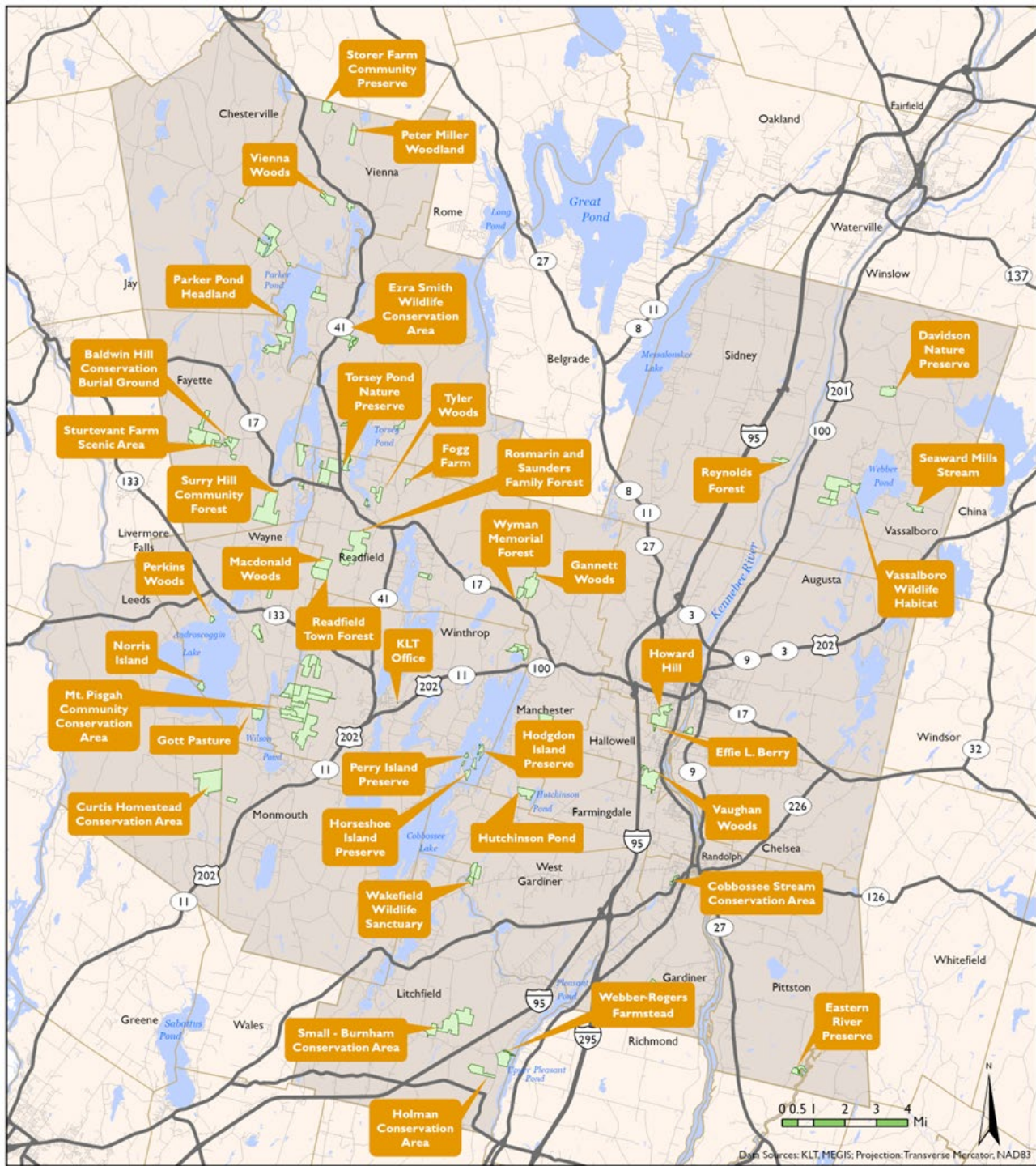
# Kennebec Land Trust - 2024

413,000-acre service area  
21 towns

Fee - 5,231 acres  
CE - 2,305 acres

KLT lands - 2.0% of land in service area

All conservation entities - 5%





## *Land Conservation and Affordable Housing*

Benjamin Peverall 2022

### **Does permanent land conservation significantly impact the availability of land for housing?**

#### Reality:

In general, traditional approaches to land conservation shift development to other locations in a given geography.







## *Conservation Land Trust and Community Land Trust Partnerships: Workforce Housing with Community, Conservation and Ecological Benefits*

Alexa Livingston 2024

- Partnerships
- Conservation land trust and community land trusts
- Regional and community land use planning

## COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

Non-profit holds land on behalf of a community and serves as the long-term steward

- affordable housing
- community gardens
- civic buildings, commercial spaces, and community facilities on the land

Buildings are typically owned by individuals, families, businesses, or nonprofits, CLT owns the underlying land.

Splitting ownership of two assets allows the buildings to be sold (or rented) for a more affordable price.



Case Study: Jones Marsh, Bar Harbor, Maine

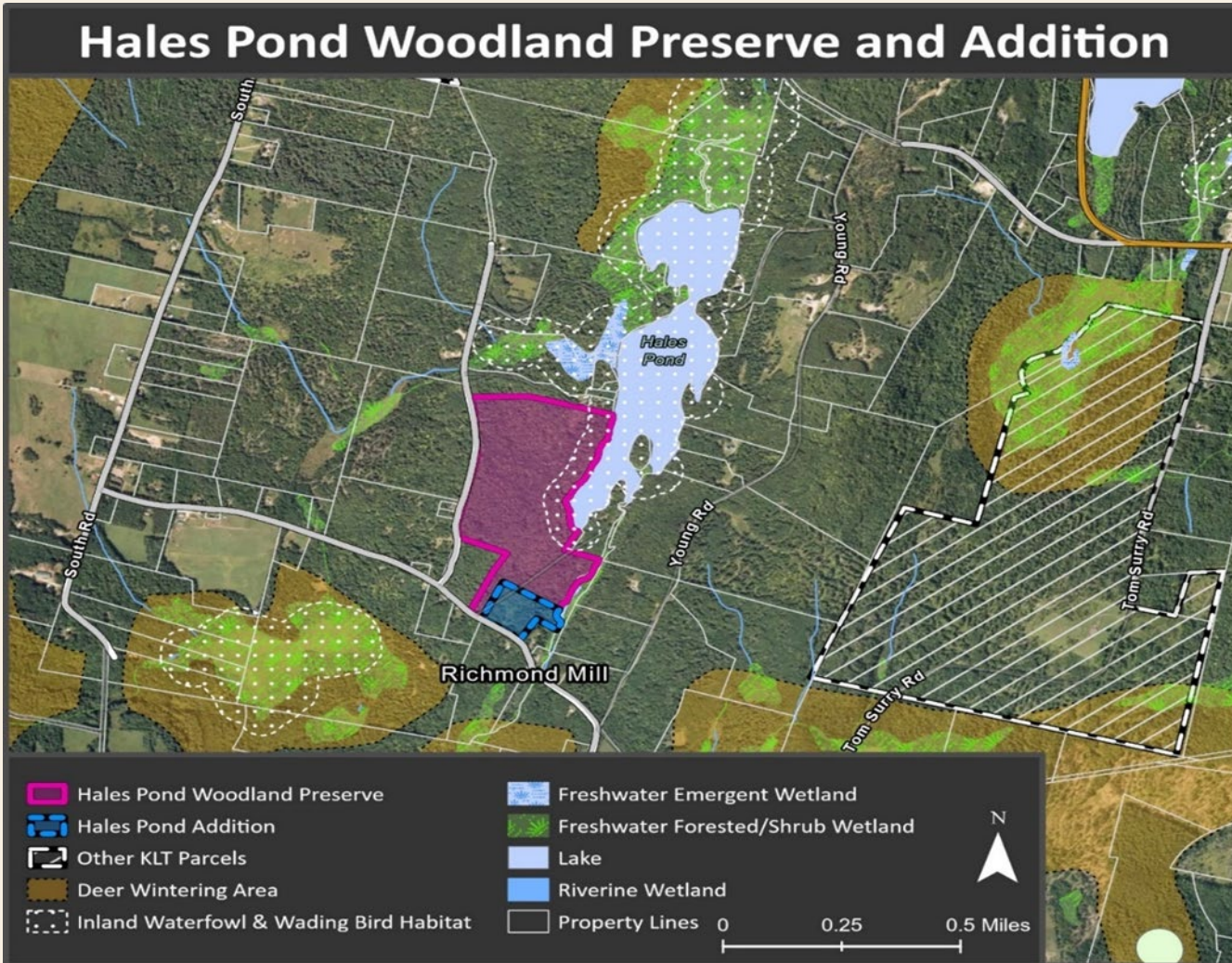
Key Partners:

- Island Housing Trust (Community Land Trust)
- Maine Coast Heritage Trust (Conservation Land Trust)



# Case Study - Fayette, Maine

Available: eight acres, well, septic, ~510 feet of road frontage, adjacent to other homes



## Scenarios:

1. Open market sale to high bidder  
Likely one house lot - owner would have access over KLT property to Hales Pond, trails
2. KLT raises funds to add acreage to Preserve
3. KLT raise funds and works with new Community Land Trust  
Four affordable homes; stream frontage conserved; multiple families have access to trails, pond

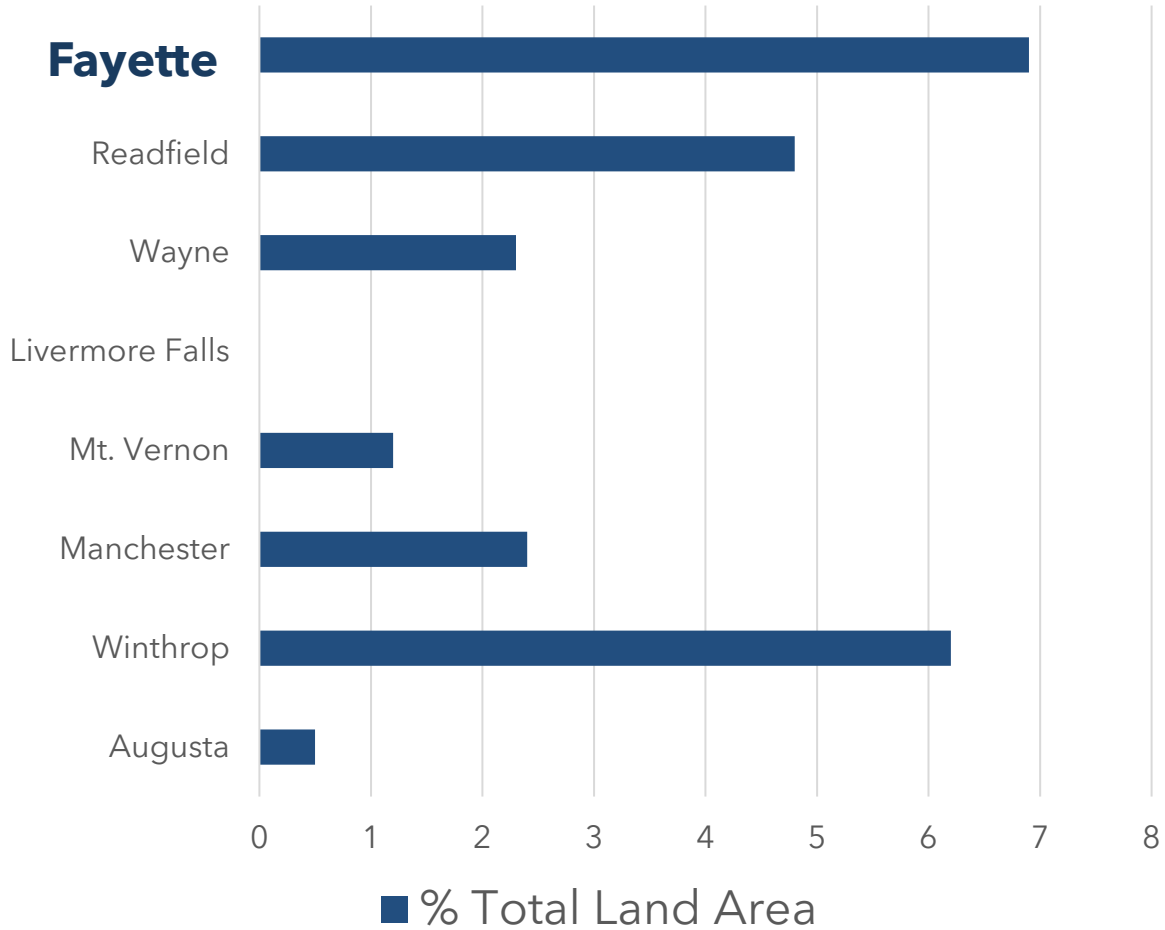
# Fayette, Maine

## Median Home Price

|                 | 2000            | 2018             | % Change      |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|
| <b>Fayette</b>  | <b>\$95,300</b> | <b>\$206,500</b> | <b>116.7%</b> |
| Readfield       | \$104,900       | \$205,000        | 95.4%         |
| Wayne           | \$130,900       | \$210,000        | 60.4%         |
| Livermore Falls | \$69,600        | \$67,000         | -3.7%         |
| Mt. Vernon      | \$90,500        | \$207,500        | 129.3%        |
| Manchester      | \$124,300       | \$193,000        | 55.3%         |
| Winthrop        | \$97,300        | \$189,450        | 94.7%         |
| Augusta         | \$80,500        | \$140,000        | 73.9%         |
| Kennebec County | \$87,200        | \$160,000        | 83.5%         |

Source: 2000 Census, Maine Housing Authority

## KLT Conservation Land by Town



Source: KLT, 2024

# Fayette, Maine

## Some Perspectives from Residents and Visitors

Appreciate:

- KLT trails, open space, protected wildlife habitat, hunting, outdoor recreation, snowmobile trails
- KLT pays taxes - tree growth rate

Concerns:

- cost of land, housing

Reality: Tremendous real estate pressure

**Solutions? Work together!**



## Possible Next Steps

- Maine DECD grant housing inventory - Town
- Aging for All Committee - priorities-Town
- Land trust clear about conservation priorities - KLT
- Land use planning - GrowSmart Maine?
- Community land trust? - Town interest? KLT support
- Other?

**Partnerships & communication key!**

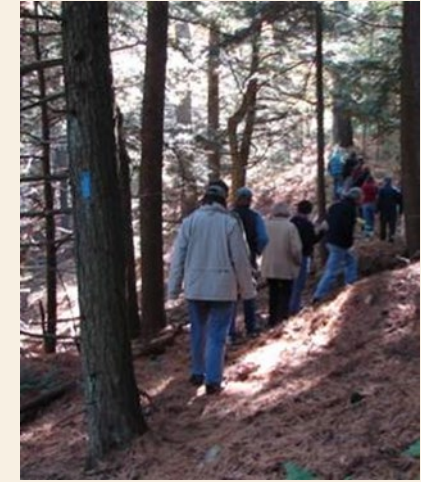


## Opportunities:

- New conservation and community partnerships & connections
- Broader membership?
- Resilient rural communities

## Challenges:

- Takes time for some traditional land trust supporters to understand a broader view of conservation
- Staff resources for partnerships







## Local Wood WORKS: Primary Goals

- Keep forests as forests
- Support rural economies and communities

[www.localwoodworks.org](http://www.localwoodworks.org)

*A Long-Term Approach to Sustainable Forest Management*

Kennebec Land Trust  
The Nature Conservancy



Elmina B. Sewall  
FOUNDATION





# CLIMATE SMART FORESTRY, LOCAL WOOD, AND HOUSING

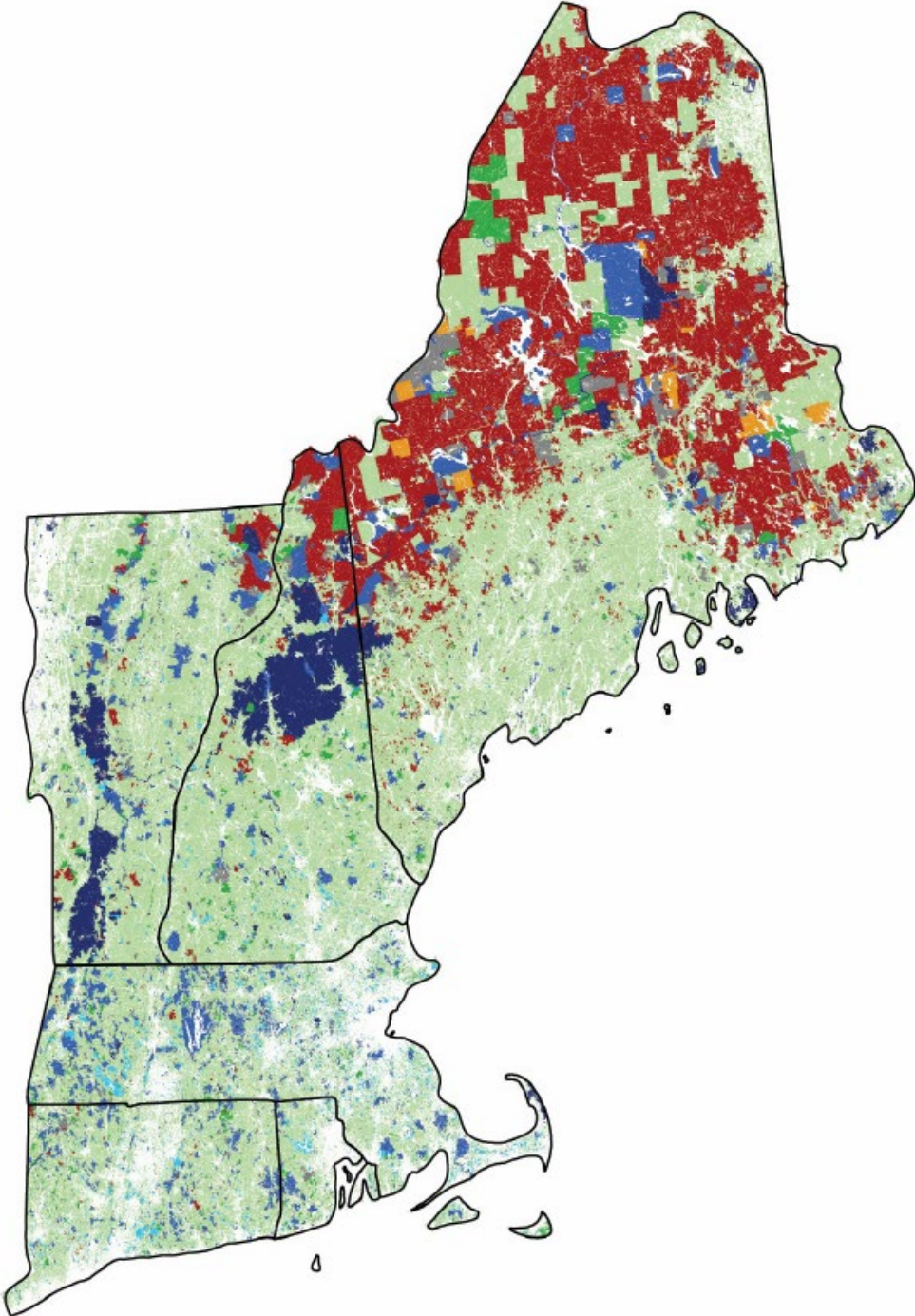
Brian Donahue, Massachusetts Woodlands  
Institute







# Forest Ownerships Across New England







JOHN DEERE

540D  
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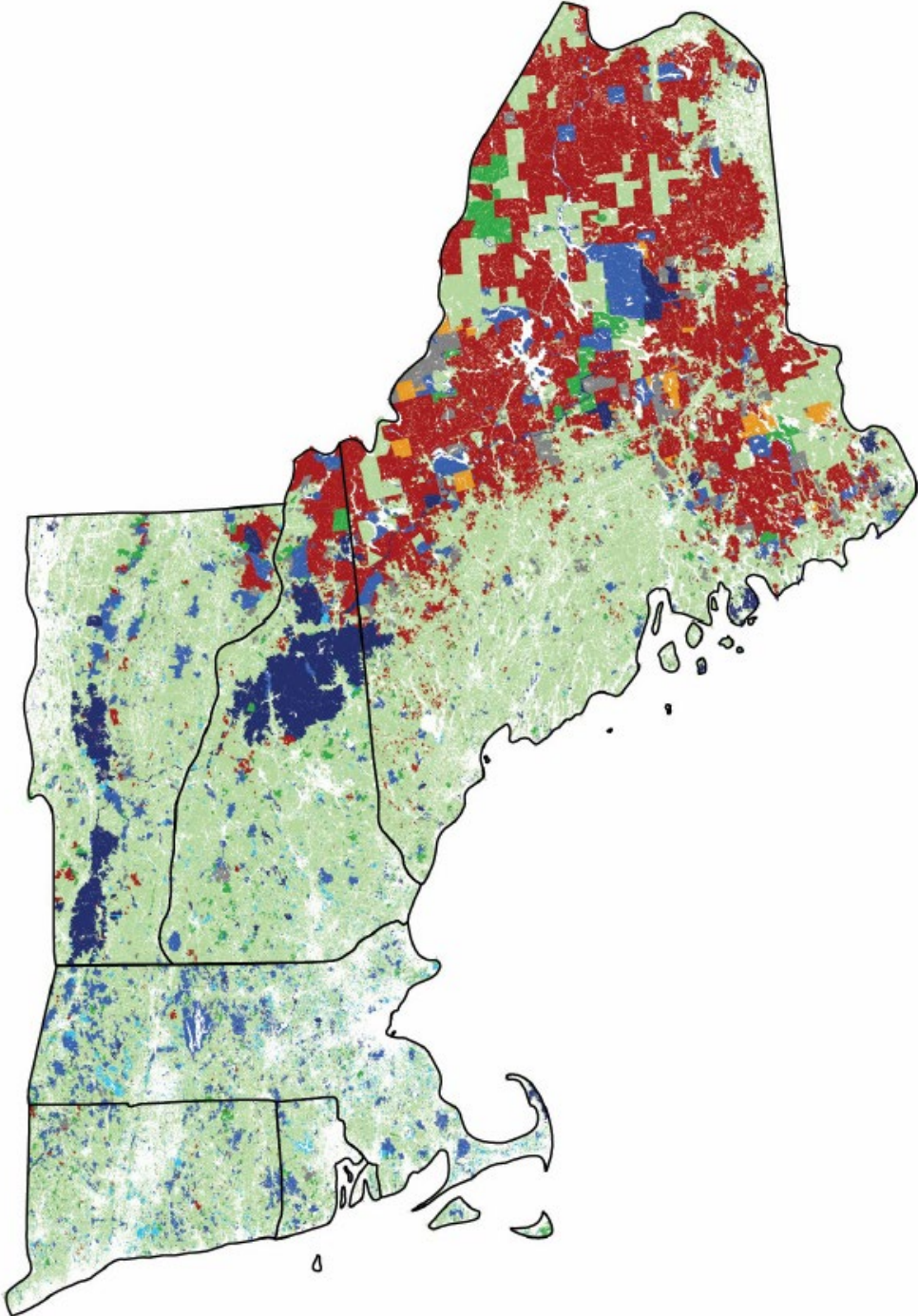




# BEYOND THE “ILLUSION OF PRESERVATION”

Taking Regional Responsibility by Protecting Forests, Reducing Consumption, and Expanding Ecological Forestry in New England

# Forest Ownerships Across New England





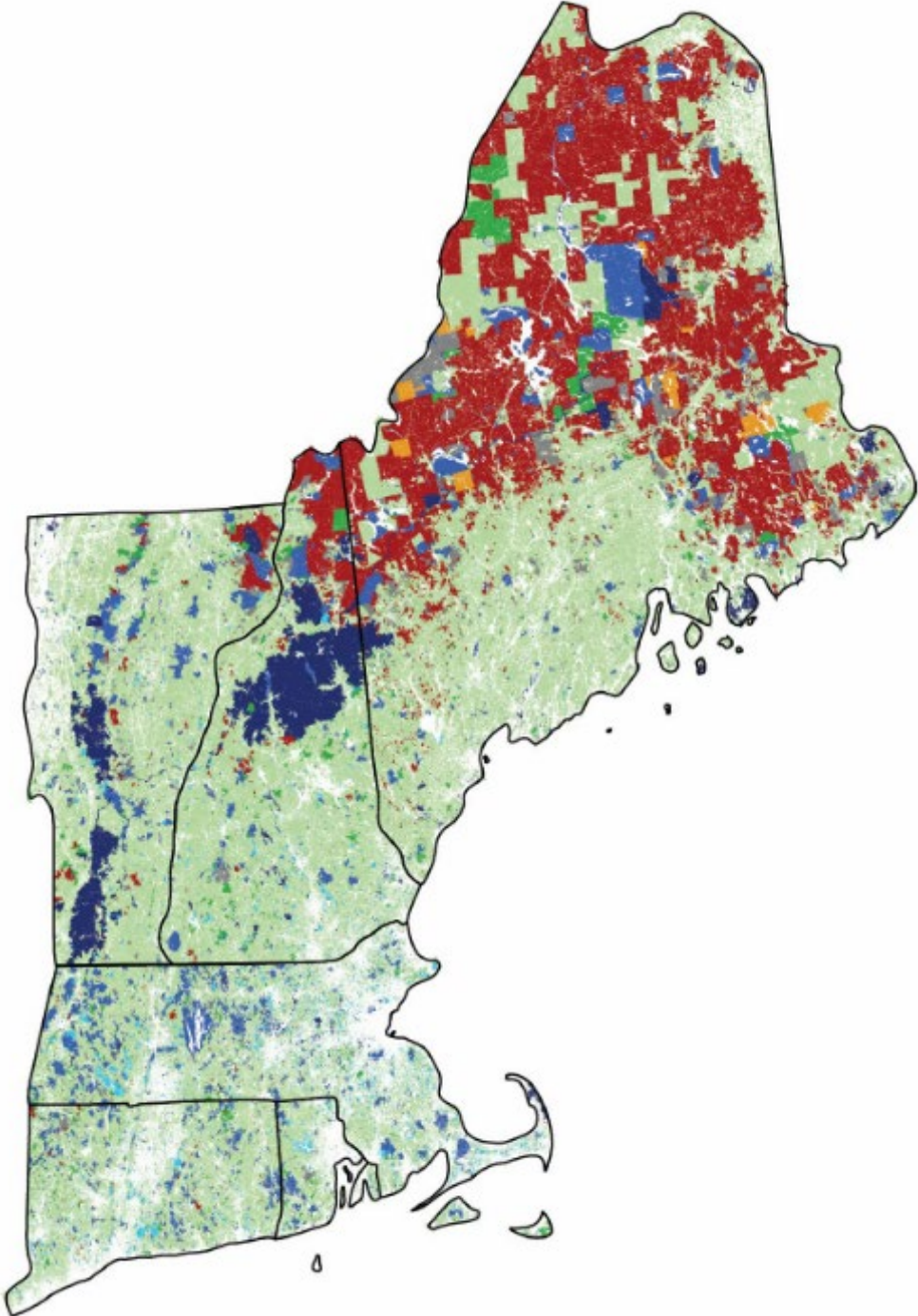








# Forest Ownerships Across New England







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**Climate-Smart Commodities**

# Commercial Landowner Enrollment











# Q&A AND OPEN DIALOGUE