



Cupsuptic Lake Forest Legacy Tract, Maine

December 1993



Undeveloped shoreline of Mooslookmeguntic and Cupsuptic Lakes, Maine.

Undeveloped shoreline is a rare commodity in the United States. Maine, in partnership with the USDA Forest Service, is keeping forested shoreline undeveloped. On December 8, 1993, 1,272 acres along Cupsuptic and Mooslookmeguntic Lakes were placed under a conservation easement so that development is prohibited forever. The Forest Service purchased the easement with \$843,000 of Forest Legacy Program funds. The landowners, Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust, have developed a Stewardship Plan to guide the management of the land.

The Rangeley Trust approached the State of Maine, which was looking for a pilot Forest Legacy Project. "The piece met all of our criteria," says Tom Doak of the Maine Forest Service, who coordinated Legacy Project. "It's a piece that's obviously threatened, it's been for sale, and its an area

where development is a major possibility. It also contains very good forest land."

"People spoil what they admire and when they get it all built up, they move on, because what they admire was what they started with, not what they ended with."

Bessie Phillips

The Cupsuptic tract is part of a much larger protection effort covering approximately 33,000 acres. The effort is driven by local legend Bessie Phillips' commitment to her husband's idea to preserve the lake shoreline, a vision he was working towards when he died in 1971. Piece by piece for the next 22 years, Mrs. Phillips acquired land around the lake. Mrs. Phillips donated a conservation easement on 3,000 acres to the Rangeley Lakes Heritage trust, which will be the required match for the Forest Legacy Purchase. "People spoil what they admire," says Mrs. Phillips, "and when they get it all built up, they move on, because what they admire was what they started with, not what they ended with."

The U.S. Government purchased the right to restrict development, and the right to restrict the size of clearcuts. Non-motorized public access was also purchased. "The U.S. Government is proud to be a player in the protection of this spectacular shoreline," exclaims Dick Ackerman, Forest Service official.

The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands has agreed to visit the landowner and forest every year to assure the provisions of the easement are being followed.

The Forest Legacy Program protects important forest areas from any kind of development. The Federal Government purchases development rights from willing landowners. The landowner keeps all land rights not purchased by the Federal Government. Protected forests may provide key wildlife habitat, protect water quality, offer outstanding recreation opportunities, provide outstanding scenic views, contain historical sites, and provide opportunities to continue traditional forest uses, such as timber harvesting. The Forest Legacy Program is a Federal- State Partnership. A State may become a part of the Forest Legacy Program by completing an Assessment of Need.