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MAINE MOUNTAIN COLLABORATIVE AWARDED \$120,000 TO BOOST LONG TERM FOREST MANAGEMENT

Grant is one of ten awarded nationally, will support the Exemplary Forestry Investment Fund.

Portland, ME, (June1, 2020 –

The Maine Mountain Collaborative (MMC) received a grant from the Innovative Finance for National Forests Grant Program to support an ongoing project that connects private impact investment capital to long term forest management in western Maine forests. The Exemplary Forestry Investment Fund is a timber investment fund that addresses two challenges: declining public/private funding for land conservation in Maine, and declining forest conditions necessary for healthy ecosystems.

The MMC is a group of nine land conservation organizations working in the western Maine mountain region. The \$120,000 grant to the MMC, which is being matched by an anonymous private foundation, was part of the first \$1.8 million awarded nationally for the Innovative Finance for National Forests Grant Program. This new partnership is funded and administered by the USDA Forest Service National Partnership Office's Conservation Finance Program, the National Forest Foundation (NFF), and the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Endowment). The ten projects funded were selected from nearly 50 proposals received in the inaugural year of the grant program.

“The Maine Mountain Collaborative has brought together conservation and forestry organizations to conserve forestland for working forests, recreation, and ecological protection,” **said Senators Susan Collins and Angus King.** “This funding will help MMC promote biodiversity, increase high-value forest products, and implement climate change mitigation measures in the

western Maine mountain region, while supporting the regional communities and the jobs closely tied to the landscape.”

“In order to mitigate the harmful effects of climate change, we must protect our forests, which sequester carbon and reduce harmful greenhouse gases in the environment. This substantial grant will help Maine Mountain Collaborative protect our state’s abundant forests, conserve our natural resources, and promote environmental resilience. As a long-time conservationist, I’m proud to see this funding come to Maine, and I look forward to seeing the results of this generous funding,” said Congresswoman Chellie Pingree.

“We’re excited to continue to advance the Exemplary Forestry Investment Fund from concept to reality with the help of this grant,” said Bryan Wentzell, executive director of the Maine Mountain Collaborative. “The Collaborative’s strength is bringing together the knowledge and expertise of Maine’s leading forest conservation organizations to innovate new conservation tools.”

“The long-term goals of the Exemplary Forestry Investment Fund (EFIF) are to increase stocking of the forest for improved habitat, high-value forest products, and carbon sequestration while providing acceptable returns to investors,” said Bob Perschel, Executive Director of the New England Forestry Foundation and a partner on the EFIF project. “these complement goals of the White Mountain National Forest, which is contiguous with and includes a portion of the western Maine’s mountains.”

“We are excited about working with the Maine Mountain Collaborative. We have shared goals around increasing public awareness of the positive impacts that sound forestry can have on wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, forest productivity and forest health. The work that will be conducted by our neighbors on the outskirts of the White Mountain National Forest in Maine will have lasting benefits to not only their land, but to the White Mountain National Forest,” said Connie Carpenter, Acting Forest Supervisor on the White Mountain National Forest.

“This IFNF partnership program is the most ambitious effort yet to unlock private investment capital to improve the health of America’s National Forest System and adjacent private lands,” said Carlton Owen, the Endowment’s CEO. “Each award is an important experiment to determine if investors can realize environmental and social outcomes, and financial returns, while delivering much-needed financing to address burgeoning needs.”

“The Innovative Finance for National Forests program is advancing the Forest Service’s efforts to think outside the box when it comes to financing critical work to promote watershed health and sustainable recreation infrastructure,” said Jacqueline Emanuel, Director of the Forest

Service National Partnership Office. “This program supports our efforts to test new ideas, demonstrate proof of concept, and refine and scale innovative approaches that leverage private capital to finance priority work.”

Additional information about Innovative Finance for National Forests grant program is available at ifnfgrants.org.

About Maine Mountain Collaborative

The MMC is a coalition of statewide, regional, and national conservation and forestry organizations bringing a shared focus and innovative vision to accelerate the pace and scale of conservation in one of the world’s most intact temperate forests.

The Maine Mountain Collaborative members include the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust, the Conservation Fund, the Forest Society of Maine, The Mountain Conservancy, Mahoosuc Land Trust, the New England Forestry Foundation, Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust, and the Trust for Public Land.

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