

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: David Trahan, Executive Director

Sportsman's Alliance of Maine Stands with Partners To Oppose National Park Plan

AUGUSTA, Maine—At a press conference today, SAM executive director David Trahan stood in solidarity with Bob Meyers of the Maine Snowmobile Association and the Forest Products Council to voice opposition to the latest proposals to create a national park in northern Maine.

“We have no objection to the long-term protection of wildlife habitat,” said Trahan. “SAM has been very supportive of many projects that have protected hundreds of thousands of acres from development over the years. But a national park would not be a welcome place for sportsmen,” he continued. “Whether it’s the original proposal of RESTORE: The North Woods, which actually talked about clearing out everything north of Dover and returning it to a pre-colonial state, or the Roxanne Quimby proposal to anchor a national park around Baxter State Park, we cannot support any proposal which ends traditional uses in order to create a playground for the “non-consumptive users” he said.

Proponents of a new national park in Maine have cited rapid changes in land ownership and the pressure to turn faster profits for corporate bottom lines as reasons to set aside millions of acres from further wood harvesting or development. “Like everyone, we are deeply concerned about the future of the economy in northern Maine,” Trahan continued. “But the type of economic development that people could expect from a national park would destroy the self-sufficient and independent culture of people who work in the woods in Maine, replacing that economy with one based on low paying service sector jobs. Not only do we believe the feasibility study is a foot in the door, but we believe Roxanne Quimby’s real goal is to create a 3 million acre National Park. Such a park would guarantee that a culture steeped in decades of hunting and outdoor tradition passed through generations of Maine families would vanish.”

For decades landowners, sportsman and the logging industry have worked out our differences through mutual respect and cooperation. We reject Roxanne Quimby’s attempt at stereotyping snowmobilers, hunters and others by banning them from those lands used by generations of Maine citizens simply because they take part in those activities. We welcome and thank Governor LePage and Cate Street Capital in resolving the East Millinocket Mill closures. Those two mills and the hundreds of jobs they bring back are the foundation of economic development for the region. A comprehensive jobs and development plan is what is needed for the region, not a National Park.

In August, SAM’s board of directors adopted the following resolution in opposition to the proposed national park idea:

RESOLUTION OF THE SPORTSMAN’S ALLIANCE OF MAINE REGARDING A PROPOSED NATIONAL PARK IN NORTHERN MAINE

WE, The 15,000 members of the Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine, assembled for the purpose of advocating for conservation of our natural resources and for the defense of our sporting heritage, contemplate with grave concern the troubled economy in rural Maine, and we stand in profound respect of the ability of the communities of the state to determine their own future prosperity. The north of Maine is home to a storied tradition of self-sufficiency and abounds in sporting opportunity for those who live, work, and visit there. Vast tracts of land are contemplated to be set aside, out of reach of all Maine residents and our visitors, and so we harbor profound concern about a proposed National Park in northern Maine, and so therefore **RESOLVE THAT:**

WHEREAS, the forests of Maine provide thousands of proud Mainers with self-sufficient livelihoods and sporting opportunities to recreate; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a National Park would prohibit economic activity such as logging, operation of sporting camps, and retail activities to support the businesses there; and

WHEREAS, management of Maine’s historic fisheries would be thrown into question, stifling the grandest opportunities to seek native brook trout and landlocked salmon in the nation; and

WHEREAS, sustainable forest practices enhance wildlife habitat and prevent fire danger; and

WHEREAS, hunting, trapping, snowmobiling, and other traditional outdoor activities would be severely limited or banned in a National Park, obliterating hundreds of years of traditional access; and

WHEREAS, even our tribal neighbors would lose the opportunity to hunt and trap on lands used by their nations for thousands of years; and

WHEREAS, hunting, fishing, and snowmobiling are worth hundreds of millions of dollars to Maine’s rural economy every year, employing outfitters, retailers, guides, and lodges, who would be adversely affected; and

WHEREAS, “eco-tourism” around a National Park can be manifestly defined as seasonal tee-shirt shops, water slides, and miniature golf courses as found in the approaches to Acadia National Park in areas that were once abundant farmland; and

WHEREAS, our sporting tradition and heritage is what makes Maine truly a special place and world-class destination that would be impossible to maintain in or around a National Park; and

WHEREAS, the 125th Maine Legislature enacted SP 519, JOINT RESOLUTION, MEMORIALIZING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, AND THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO OPPOSE THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL PARK IN MAINE’S NORTH WOODS; and

WHEREAS, the discussion of a National Park creates divisions within our communities when we should be working together, and could add to the dark climate around the possible sale of mills in the region, now, therefore, be it highly

RESOLVED; that the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, as the state's largest conservation organization, opposes the creation of a National Park that would eliminate traditional activities in Maine's North Woods, stifle economic development, and stop wildlife and habitat management, to the detriment of the future of our State, and further, be it highly

RESOLVED; that the Charter of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts granted by King Charles II, which included the District of Maine, included provisions for submerged lands and navigable ways to be held in common for fishing, fowling, and hunting in seasonable times, and that therefore the creation of a National Park where such activities would be banned would corrupt the organic charters of our common laws; and further, be it highly

RESOLVED; that we stand in defense of our sporting heritage, in order to bestow and endow future generations with the same Blessings of God that have been bestowed to us, so that we therefore oppose efforts to sweep away our economic independence and traditional cultural heritage.

Adopted this day, August 23rd, 2011, by the Board of Directors.

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