



# Winter Report

## Future of North Woods hangs in the balance

### Tough legislative fight expected in 2012

Environment Maine's top priority for 2012 is to protect the North Woods from reckless development. We have a big fight on our hands in the Legislature.

Home to many of our state's most special places, from the Western Mountains to Moosehead Lake to Mount Katahdin, the North Woods is where generations of Mainers have learned to love the outdoors, canoeing its lakes and hiking its trails.

The North Woods is unlike anywhere else on the east coast in terms of its scale and how wild it remains. It's the largest unbroken forest east of the Mississippi—home to more than 100 mountains over 3,000 feet, 3,000 lakes and ponds and 11,000 miles of rivers and streams, as well as extraordinary wildlife from loons to moose.

### Gov. LePage Targets North Woods

The future of our vast Woods is in jeopardy because Gov. Paul LePage is pushing to roll back 40 years of protections for it.

Last year, he proposed several reckless policies for the North Woods, including zoning one-third of the North Woods—more than 3 million acres—for development. We were able to stop that plan from moving forward. However, the governor's proposal to dismantle the Land Use Regulation Commission, the agency charged with protecting the North Woods, will be front and center this legislative session.

In January, a task force on the future governance of the North Woods will make



Staff

▲ Environment Maine is collecting video testimonials from Mainers talking about what the North Woods mean to them.

its recommendations to the Legislature. Unfortunately, the task force was stacked from the start, since the governor and his allies appointed all of its members. Its recommendations threaten to gut LURC, putting the North Woods at risk.

Environment Maine watchdogged the task force meetings this fall and collaborated with other environmental

groups in the state to propose changes to strengthen the commission. Now, we're focused on organizing on the ground in key legislative districts where the vote will likely be decided this session.

We expect a bruising fight in the Legislature and will need your help to safeguard Maine's natural heritage.



Tom Smith, Flickr

### more online

◀ Gov. Paul LePage is ramping up his attack on protections for the North Woods, putting beloved places like Lobster Lake at risk.

Find out how to help stop him at our new website:  
[www.EnvironmentMaine.org](http://www.EnvironmentMaine.org).

## To our members

If I ever needed a reminder of why I fight each day to protect Maine's environment, my older daughter, Bella, brought everything back into focus this summer when we were hiking in the Western Mountains and at Katahdin.

Bella, who's four years old, likes to lead the way on our hikes, following the trail markers and warning us about being in "roots-ville" when we cross an area with big tree roots and "rock-ville" when we climb over rocks. We have amazing conversations now when we're deep in the woods. Her baby sister, Harper, loves it too—being outside, carried all day in the front pack by mom or dad. These have become some of our most precious times together as a family.

So much is on the line this year as I fight, along with you and my staff, to preserve the North Woods for my daughters, your children and grandchildren, and generations to come. Thanks again for joining us. Our work wouldn't be possible without you.



Emily Figdor  
State Director

## Recent action

### Roadmap released to break Maine's oil dependence

In mid-October, Environment Maine released a first-of-its-kind analysis showing that a comprehensive strategy to transition Maine off oil can reduce our state's oil use nearly 40 percent by 2030.

"It is time to declare our independence from oil. We can do it by getting the most out of every drop of oil we use and shifting to cleaner sources of energy," explained Environment Maine's Andrew Francis at a Portland news conference.

Our new report, "Getting Off Oil: A Roadmap for Curbing Our Dependence on Petroleum" evaluates 17 public policies with the potential to significantly reduce oil consumption in Maine.

A new Maine law passed in 2011 and spearheaded by Environment Maine commits the state to reduce its oil use 30 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050. Our report shows the goals are doable and provides a strong starting place for Maine to develop its oil-reduction plan, as required by the new law.

### Suit protects "abysmally low" salmon population

Atlantic salmon are returning to Maine rivers last year in numbers not seen in decades. While good news, the numbers are "still abysmally low," as the *Bangor Daily News* put it, compared with historic runs. On the Androscoggin, just 47 fish returned in 2011; on the Kennebec, 63 fish returned. The two rivers once teemed with salmon runs of 100,000 or more.

Last year's better-than-expected salmon runs provide both hope and urgency to Environment Maine's lawsuits against the owners of seven dams on those rivers under the Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act. We are asking the dam owners to provide safe upstream and downstream passage for the remaining salmon. The trial is currently scheduled for July—not a moment too soon to protect the last wild Atlantic salmon in the United States.



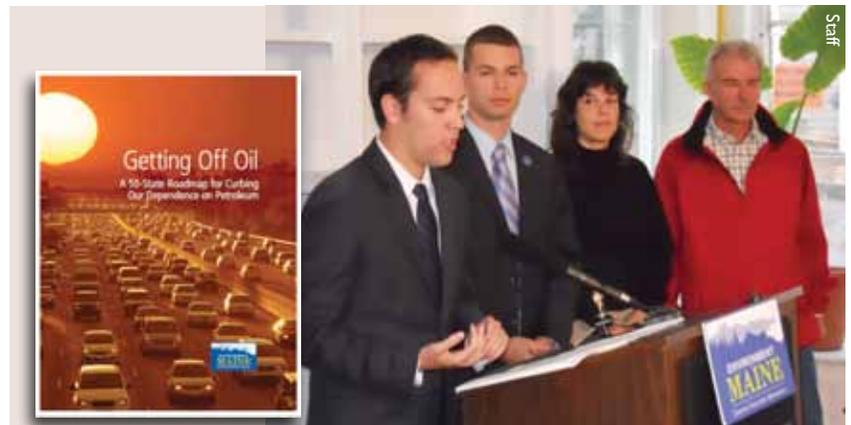
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▲ Field Associate Andrew Francis, left, released the Get Off Oil Roadmap in Portland alongside state Rep. Alex Cornell du Houx, homeowner Ashley Salisbury and Warm Tech Solutions owner Ashley Richards.



# Ballot campaign gives Mainers a say on state's energy future

In the fall, Environment Maine launched a new campaign to greatly expand clean energy in Maine—and, at the same time, help block efforts by Gov. Paul LePage to gut Maine's clean energy standard.

Environment Maine is working to put a citizen's initiative on clean energy on the ballot. The ballot initiative will help break Maine's dependence on dirty energy sources, cut pollution, safeguard our health, and create thousands of well-paying jobs—from building, operating, and manufacturing components for wind farms and solar panels, to installing energy-efficient equipment in our homes and businesses.

## The goal: 20% clean energy by 2020

The initiative would require power companies to double from 10 percent to 20 percent the amount of electricity they obtain from new renewable sources like wind and solar power by 2020. It would also require them to invest in energy efficiency to lower energy costs for homes and businesses.

In addition, the initiative could help block efforts by Gov. LePage to roll back Maine's clean energy standard—which the governor says is one of his top priorities—since the rules prohibit the Legislature from considering bills on the same subject as pending ballot initiatives. In announcing the citizen's initiative at a news conference in Bangor, Environment Maine Director Emily Figdor joined a coalition of clean energy companies, construction businesses, other environmental groups, workers and veterans who all back the initiative.

Figdor told the media, "Make no mistake about it, our dependence on dirty energy pollutes our air and water, threatens our children's health and damages the environment. Clean energy is so important to our health, environment and future that Mainers deserve the chance to weigh in on it directly." Environment Maine is one of three organizations leading the effort to collect more than 57,000 valid

signatures to qualify the initiative for the ballot. Environment Maine is heading up the operation in southern Maine.

## Volunteers collect over 16,000 signatures

The campaign got off to a strong start on Election Day 2011, when our coalition collected 28,000 signatures to qualify the initiative for the ballot less than two weeks after launching the campaign. A network of more than 325 volunteers collected the signatures at polls across the state. In southern Maine, volunteers working with Environment Maine collected more than 16,000 signatures—nearly double our initial goal.

"Clean, renewable energy is the best way to protect our environment and to keep jobs and money in our community," said Ann Morrill, a volunteer who worked with us in South Portland. Volunteers collected signatures through the end of the year—at holiday celebrations like tree lightings, at transfer stations, at grocery stores, at art walks and crafts fairs, and many other places. We're optimistic that we'll qualify the clean energy initiative for the ballot.



## In the news

▲ Environment Maine Director Emily Figdor discusses threats to Maine's waters and wildlife on MPBN's Maine Watch.



## Interview with a volunteer

Liz Newman is an architect who lives in Portland with her husband and son. She volunteered to collect signatures on Election Day to put a clean energy initiative on the ballot.

### Why did you decide to collect signatures for clean energy?

*I got a call from Environment Maine asking me to volunteer at a polling place on Election Day, and I decided to do it. I'm really concerned about the climate crisis and what it means for our kids and our future. It's the biggest issue we face, and this was a way to have an impact.*

*Gov. Paul LePage and powerful business interests are blocking progress on climate change, and we as citizens are the only ones who are going to turn it around. There are so many better ways to get our energy. We should be focused on creating jobs and building our economy through green, clean initiatives like this one that also improve the environment and our health. Three wins in one!*

### You signed up for a one-hour morning shift but ended up staying all day. Why?

*I knew that if I left, some people wouldn't have the opportunity to sign the petition, so I took the day off and stayed. It was a long day, but worth it. I collected 372 signatures!*

To learn about future opportunities to volunteer or take action, sign up for our email alerts at [www.EnvironmentMaine.org](http://www.EnvironmentMaine.org).

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## Winter Report

VOLUME 9 | NO. 2 | 2012

### Congress to slash key conservation program

Congress is poised to make unprecedented cuts, of up to 70 percent, to the major federal conservation program that helps protect Acadia National Park and other treasured places in Maine.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a decades-old program funded by a small portion of federal royalties from offshore drilling. Congress raids the Fund each year, diverting resources intended for conservation elsewhere—with serious implications for Acadia National Park.

About a thousand acres of land within the boundaries of Acadia remain privately owned. Two parcels of land are on the real estate market now, and other tracts remain in limbo because the park doesn't have the funding to purchase the land and permanently protect it. Environment Maine has been pressing Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins to fight for Acadia and reject the proposed cut this year.



◀ *Congressional budget cuts could make it even harder for Acadia to permanently protect all of the land within its boundaries.*

➡ *To learn more and get involved, go to [www.EnvironmentMaine.org](http://www.EnvironmentMaine.org)*

### Environment Maine

#### Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Maine. We focus exclusively on protecting Maine's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.