

## PLUM CREEK PLAN

### Potential to Harm Tourist Economy

*The following summarizes multiple pages of technical testimony submitted in summer 2007 to Maine's Land Use Regulation Commission by internationally recognized sustainable tourism expert Costas Christ. Full testimony, sources: <ftp://ftp.state.me.us/outgoing/PlumCreek>.*

Rather than creating a sustainable tourism plan consistent with international tourism industry trends that would economically benefit the region for generations, Plum Creek's current concept plan could damage the local economy by impacting negatively on the natural and cultural heritage that makes the area so valuable in the burgeoning ecotourism market.

#### Too Many Unanswered Questions

In its current form, Plum Creek's concept plan is ill-defined, with too many questions unanswered on what impacts 2,315 residential and resort units spread across 20,000 acres of natural habitat will have on the landscape. What systems will be in place to serve all this development? What kind of environmental footprint will these buildings have? Where are the details on how Plum Creek plans to follow up on its "low impact" promise?

#### Expect the Worst

With so many questions left unanswered, a worst-case scenario must be considered a real possibility—a huge development project that damages the very natural attractions that draw visitors to the area. Gated resorts. No Trespassing signs. Congested waters. Traffic overload on limited roadways. Strains on local infrastructure. Such ill-planned elements could make Moosehead a model of tourism gone wrong, sparking a negative market backlash with serious economic impacts.

#### Preserve Lake's 'Wild Side'

Conserving Moosehead Lake's eastern shore—a major draw to Moosehead visitors, and a benefit to Greenville vendors serving them—is key to a sustainable tourism economy. However, Plum Creek's plan to develop this side of the lake, including over

300 residential and resort housing units on Lily Bay Peninsula, would further erode the remaining 'wild areas' near Greenville on the lake's eastern shore, pushing sought-after nature outdoor experiences farther away from Greenville and bringing sprawl in its wake.

#### A Better Option

Rather than spread development across 20,000 acres of natural landscape around Moosehead Lake, Plum Creek's extensive resort and residential housing units should be focused closer to already developed areas like Greenville. A scaled-back version of the 800-housing-unit Moose Mountain Resort could be a model for sustainable nature-based tourism resorts in North America, while limiting negative environmental impacts, keeping visitors close to Greenville to maximize local economic opportunities, and maintaining accessible wilderness that is the lifeblood and heritage of the region.

#### A lot To Gain . . . If We Get It Right

Maine and the Moosehead Lake region have a tremendous amount to gain if tourism development is done right. Likewise, there is too much to lose economically, culturally, and environmentally if tourism development is poorly conceived and implemented. In charting a course for Moosehead's future, established sustainable tourism principles and practices should be the development standard to follow, not a plan that includes rezoning large swaths of wilderness lands for residential and resort housing units, conservation easements that allow continued mining, large scale timber harvesting, industrial herbicide spraying, and new roads cut into the forest, along with vague promises—the plan Plum Creek has put forward.