

**PLUM CREEK PLAN**

**Threatened Canada Lynx Put at Further Risk**

*The following summarizes multiple pages of technical testimony submitted in summer 2007 to Maine's Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) by Peggy Struhsacker, wildlife biologist for the National Wildlife Federation. Full testimony, source documentation: <ftp://ftp.state.me.us/outgoing/PlumCreek>.*

Plum Creek's proposed development does not meet LURC's standard of having "no undue, adverse impact" because of the negative effects it would have on Canada lynx inhabiting the area. The massive project would put the threatened species at further risk by depleting prime habitat and sharply increasing lynx-vehicle collisions by drawing more traffic to the area's roadways.

**Lynx Already at Risk**

Canada lynx in Maine, *the only breeding population in the Northeast*, are at the southern edge of their range. Susceptible to multiple threats, they have been showing signs of declining survival and reproduction. Already at risk, the population of this important species would only come under further stress with Plum Creek's extensive development.

**A Loss of Critical Habitat**

The large-scale alteration of habitat that would come with Plum Creek's plan would drive Canada lynx from an area where they have frequently been sighted and create barriers for their movement. Of particular concern is a resort and subdivision units planned for Lily Bay Peninsula that would permanently damage over 4,300 acres of lynx habitat. The home range of one to two females and one male would be destroyed, potentially eliminating an entire "lynx habitat unit" from the region.

**Road Mortality Could Lead to Local Extinction**

With roads growing and traffic increasing throughout the Moosehead region due to Plum Creek's development, so will lynx mortality spike. Current road mortality in the region is extremely low, but with increased traffic volume and the upgrading of roads it is estimated that road mortality will increase dramatically. Along with other impacts like creating barriers to lynx movement, busier roads will lead to regional declines and even local extinctions of Canada lynx. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regards road mortality as a high threat to lynx, recommending in its management plan to avoid upgrading existing roads and building new high-traffic roads through lynx habitat, such as on Lily Bay Peninsula and the north shore of Long Pond.

**A Violation of Endangered Species Act**

Under the Endangered Species Act, any activities causing "harm" to protected species is illegal, including significant environmental modification. With its destruction of threatened Canada lynx habitat and effect on road mortality, Plum Creek's proposal would fall under this rule, directly and indirectly causing the death and displacement of the current lynx population. By law, federal agencies, states, counties, and municipalities can be sued for authorizing such activity.