Raymond Community Forest Project
Request to the Raymond Board of Selectmen to Sponsor the Land for Maine's Future Application
February 11, 2014

The Raymond Community Forest Project was presented by the Raymond Conservation Commission (RCC) and Loon Echo Land Trust (LELT) to the Raymond Board of Selectmen (RBOS) on August 14, 2012 and May 14, 2013. The project includes 347 +/- acres of forestland in North Raymond located on Conesca Road, including the cliffs and summit of Pismire Mountain, currently owned by Hancock Land Company.

The presentations described the relation to the Raymond Open Space Plan and LELT's interest to partner with the Town to help it acquire and create a community and recreational forest project. Ownership models, budget and timelines were reviewed. The RBOS voted unanimously (with one abstention) to support the acquisition and ask its residents at 2014 town meeting for a $50,000 appropriation and then at 2015 town meeting to own the land subject to a conservation easement held by LELT. Preliminary timber harvest projections suggest that long-term forest management would offset the loss in property tax revenue, and additional income may be generated to help support the management of the property. The RCC also held a town-wide survey in May of 2013 that demonstrated strong public support for this project.

In June of 2013 LELT signed an option agreement with HLC with favorable terms that require the parties to raise $570,000 to purchase the land, fund legal and other transaction expenses and fulfill endowment goals. RCC and LELT are working to raise enough funds to confidently exercise the option to purchase the land before the deadline of December 31, 2014. Then an additional full year will be granted by Hancock before the closing takes place, giving the parties additional time to complete the local fundraising campaign. Exercising the agreement in 2014 depends on successfully receiving three major sources of support; US Forest Service grant, Land for Maine's Future (LMF) grant, and a Town appropriation.

LELT submitted the US Forest Service grant in January ($100,000 request), and soon the LMF grant is due. LELT is requesting that the Town be the primary applicant to the LMF grant. The attached Inquiry Form is due in late February, and the final application in late March. LELT would draft these forms and proposals for review by the RCC Chair and Town Manager (suggested approach). One reason for having the Town sponsor the LMF application is that it would demonstrate strong local support and residents will likely approve owning the land.

A state agency needs to sponsor each LMF application. LELT has contacted the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and they are willing to be the sponsor of a $200,000 grant proposal. They note that they need to hold a site walk first, and that this project would compete at the local level as a conservation and recreation project. If funded, the state department requires that a binding project agreement be signed, annual reports be submitted, and that they be a third party holder to the conservation easement with LELT.

Appendix A

Inquiry Form

Conservation and Recreation Lands and Water Access Projects

POTENTIAL PROJECT INFORMATION:

Property name: _____ **Date**: _____

Property Location: Municipality: _____ County: _____

Landowner: *(please list full name and mailing address of landowner):*
Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Town & State: _____
(Tel. #) _____ (Fax #:)_____ (E-Mail) _____

Inquiry Contact Person: *(please list full name and mailing address)*
Name: _____
Mailing Address: _____
Town & State: _____
(Tel.#) _____ (E-Mail) _____

Potential Partners *(e.g. Conservation Commission, Federal Agency, local Land Trust or Non-profit Org.)*
(Mailing Address, telephone #, fax #)
_____
_____
_____

Project Size *(Total acres)* _____ with Shoreland *(Length of frontage)* _____

Major Land Categories: (*Please check all of the land categories that apply.)*

- ☐ Recreation Land
- ☐ Water Access Land - ☐ Inland ☐ Coastal
- ☐ Areas of Scenic Interest and Prime Physical Features
- ☐ Lands Supporting Vital Ecological or Conservation Functions and Values
- ☐ Rare, Threatened or Endangered Natural Communities, Plants or Wildlife Habitat
- ☐ Farmland and Open Space *

***Note:** If the primary purpose is to protect working farmlands use the **Farm Inquiry Form**.

Level of Project Significance:
☐ State Significance ☐ Regional Significance ☐ Local Significance

Type of Project: ☐ Acquisition in Fee ☐ Conservation Easement ☐ Combination of both

Proposed State Agency Sponsor (Conservation and Recreation Lands):

☐ Maine Historic Preservation Commission ☐ Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
☐ Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry ☐ Not Yet Confirmed

Proposed State Agency Sponsor (Water Access):

☐ Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
☐ Marine Resources
☐ Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
☐ Not Yet Confirmed

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
Provide information regarding the suitability for public acquisition, special features, and proximity to existing public lands and anticipated ownership of project lands.

_____
_____
_____

Note: Please attach the following: Site Location Map
Property Boundaries on USGS Topographic Map

All owners of land being proposed to LMF are willing sellers and have full knowledge that their property is being presented to the Land for Maine's Future Board for consideration. If this project is presented to the LMF Board we will need a letter of consent from the owner(s).

Submit your completed form to:

Land for Maine's Future
28 SHS / 90 Blossom Dr. / Deering Bldg.
Augusta, ME 04333-0028