

§1892. Maine Trails System

The director shall establish trails on state-owned lands and encourage the establishment of trails on private lands by government agencies and private organizations. The director is authorized to negotiate and acquire any interests determined necessary to establish and protect trails and, after consultation with interested parties, to designate certain trails as components of the Maine Trails System. In order to satisfy the purposes of this subchapter, the elements of any trail corridor must include a right-of-way and may include facilities and buffer areas. The director may acquire fee or lesser interest, such as scenic easement, in the rights-of-way and less-than-fee interest in buffer areas adjacent to the rights-of-way in order to protect the trails from incompatible developments. In all cases, such interest must be acquired to ensure both access to the trail and maintenance of appropriate conditions. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

If all reasonable efforts to acquire lands or interests therein by negotiation have failed and public exigency requires it, the director, with the consent of the Governor and the commissioner, may utilize the power of eminent domain to acquire any land determined necessary to provide passage via the most direct or practicable connecting trail right-of-way across such lands; however, not more than 25 acres in any one mile may be acquired without consent of the owner and that owner and adjacent landowners may not be precluded from using motorized vehicles across such trails to maintain reasonable access to their fee or other interests in land. The right of eminent domain may not be exercised without prior review by the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over conservation matters. [PL 2009, c. 356, Pt. B, §3 (AMD).]

The director may enter into agreements with private organizations and government agencies to provide for the maintenance of established trails. Local and regional government agencies and private organizations are encouraged to assume the primary responsibility for the establishment, maintenance and administration of local trails. When necessary, the director shall coordinate the efforts of government agencies and private organizations to establish, maintain and administer trails that are regional in character. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

The director may adopt rules governing the use of the Maine Trails System as necessary to maintain the purposes of this subchapter and compatibility with federal regulations. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

1. Maine Trails System. The Maine Trails System consists of:

A. Trails designated to provide a variety of recreation opportunities. Recreation trails may be limited to foot, horse or other nonmotorized means of transportation or motorized means of transportation or a combination, as determined appropriate by the director; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

B. Trails providing for the appreciation of natural and primitive areas and for the conservation of significant scenic, historic, natural or cultural qualities of the areas through which the trails pass and offering primarily the experience of solitude and self-reliance in natural or near-natural surroundings. Rights-of-way and buffer areas may be established and maintained to further that experience, and no use or development is permitted that threatens the primitive character of the land. Nothing in this subchapter may be construed as excluding from a primitive trail system areas of development if such areas are determined by the director to be relatively insignificant compared to the system as a whole or if that development either is not likely to remain or leave a lasting mark or is integral to the trail system itself. Primitive trails may be restricted to foot traffic, including hiking, snowshoeing and skiing, except in those areas where the trails are on existing roads. The Appalachian Trail is included as a primitive trail in the Maine Trails System and other trails may also be included; and [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

C. Camp sites, shelters and related public-use and management facilities to the extent that they do not interfere with the nature and purposes of the trails they serve. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]
[PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW). PL 2009, c. 356, Pt. B, §3 (AMD).

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