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New community forest preserves 1,400 acres near Sebago Lake

The Tiger Hill Community Forest lies near the northwest edge of the lake in the town of Sebago.

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A newly created 1,400-acre community forest in Sebago has been permanently protected as part of a larger effort to protect the forested watershed surrounding Sebago Lake.

The Tiger Hill Community Forest will allow outdoor recreation and sustainable forestry while protecting the water supply that serves more than one-sixth of Maine residents, the Trust for Public Land announced Thursday.

“This project is truly a milestone for the Sebago Lake Region,” Betsy Cook, Maine program director for the The Trust for Public Land, said in a statement. “This new community forest will support the local outdoor recreation and forestry economy, protect a

critical drinking water source and provide a place for the community to connect to the outdoors and to their neighbors.”

The \$1.6 million project is the cornerstone of Sebago Clean Waters, a collaboration of nine conservation organizations to protect the forested watershed of Sebago Lake. The lake supplies 22 million gallons of



water each day to roughly 200,000 people in 10 communities around Portland.

The Loon Echo Land Trust and local residents worked with the land trust to protect the forested area. The land is now owned by Loon Echo Land Trust, which will manage the property. The Trust for Public Land facilitated the acquisition of property from landowners.

Matt Markot, executive director of Loon Echo Land Trust, said the property will remain on municipal tax rolls, “ensuring that the benefits of land conservation do not come at the expense of town budgets.”

“Land conservation supports robust outdoor recreation and wood products industries, while also preserving a traditional way of life in Maine’s Sebago Lake region,” he said. “The Tiger Hill Community Forest protects wildlife habitats, secures public access for recreation and preserves working forestland.”

The community forest project was funded by the Maine Natural Resources Conservation Program, Portland Water District, Open Space Institute’s Resilient Landscape Fund and Community Forest Fund, Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, Allagash Brewing, Norway Savings Bank and donations from individuals and foundations.

Project partners are still working to raise \$250,000 for ongoing management costs to maintain the property and build new trails and a parking area.

Source: <https://www.pressherald.com/>