

Dan Legere

*A Greenville resident
and a registered Maine Guide,
he likes Plum Creek's massive
conservation vision*



Dan Legere of Greenville didn't care much for Plum Creek's original concept plan for its land in the Moosehead Lake region. In fact, Dan was one of many local people who said Plum Creek's plan should include more permanent conservation to protect the area's remote character and its abundant recreational resources.

When Plum Creek announced a significantly revised plan in April 2006, Dan changed his opinion and said he was impressed by what he saw, especially the opportunity to permanently protect more than 400,000 acres of land that is facing intense development pressure.

A native of southern Maine, Legere, 54, moved to Greenville a little more than 25 years ago. He is a registered Maine Guide, and he owns and operates the Maine Guide Fly Shop & Guide Service near the center of Greenville's village.

"We've been tramping around on private property for decades, thinking that it was ours. Well, it's not," Legere said during an early summer interview at his shop. "Not many people around here like the idea of change, and I guess you could include me in that group. But at least Plum Creek has a long term plan."

What's your favorite part of the plan?

"That's easy . . . 400,000 acres of permanent conservation that will guarantee public access and traditional usage plus insure that logging jobs remain. Let's not forget that logging has always been the cornerstone of the local economy. That's exactly what people in this area wanted. So yes, Plum Creek did listen."

What else about the plan do you like?

"Four hundred thousand acres of permanent conservation." (*Grins*) "When you stop and think about it, that's one of the biggest local benefits. It's the part that will do the most for our economy. Everything else, whether you're talking about jobs or recreation, depends on permanent conservation."

Some people don't seem satisfied. What would you say to those critics of the plan?

"Two or three questions need to be asked of these people. First, are you a property owner? And then, is that property on the water? There are a lot of folks who already have their acre and don't want anyone else to have that privilege. I don't know what people expect may happen here without any long term plan. I also think your opinions get a lot more respect if you live here, and if you know what it takes to make a living here. There seems to be a lot of hypocrisy in these debates."

"Roughly eight years ago, the Friends of Moosehead approached Plum Creek and asked them to consider a pretty similar conservation package. It never materialized. The fact that some of those same supporters of conservation are now attacking this plan and have had very little to say about the massive conservation component, I find very ironic."

Does the Moosehead region really need a plan?

"Absolutely, I'm one of those people who would prefer nothing changed, but change is inevitable, no matter what you're talking about. No one, I think, wants to see uncontrolled development. This plan, in my mind, does strike the right balance. For those of us who live here, the alternative to Plum Creek is seeing private landowners like Roxanne Quimby, buying up the land and closing public access."

"What Plum Creek is doing is responsible planning. Sure, it's not going to make everyone happy, but what would? At the very least, this revised plan — which is a heck of a lot better than the first one — gives us an idea about what we can expect to happen. It gives us a sense of predictability about the place where we live and work."

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What do you mean by 'responsible' planning?

"It's a plan that had a lot of thought put into it. They backed away from the remote ponds and the remote areas of the Moose River, moved the resort from Brassua and scaled back the other resort. In my opinion, the new plan is a complete turn-around."

It's not easy making a living here. Why do you live here?

"The remoteness, it takes me all of 20 minutes to be on an undeveloped wild trout pond or a magnificent stretch of river fishing for landlocked salmon. When we guide folks into the backcountry, they love the remote character, the big woods experience."

"Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but Plum Creek's plan is the best way I've seen to preserve what a lot of people love about this place, not just for us but especially for future generations."

"This is — without any doubt — going to be our best opportunity to conserve and ensure for generations to come Maine's traditional back woods ways on the biggest piece of private property ever offered to the people of Maine."