

For many people who for a number of reasons can't visit the Allagash regularly, sporadically, or at all, just knowing that it is protected and that it will retain its wildness in perpetuity is in itself of utmost value.

There are many who want to save places like the Allagash for their children or grandchildren to enjoy and be able to have the same experiences that they had.

Preservation of the wilderness character of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway goes deeply into the fundamental

values that our society holds toward wild nature and its future. The values of natural diversity, wildness, solitude, renewal in nature, peacefulness of natural areas, the physical challenge of nature, the historic semblance of the wilderness from which our civilization was carved, and an opportunity to immerse oneself in a relatively wild area and reflect on our place and obligations to the natural world are but a few of these values. These are all challenged by those who seek to degrade the wildness of the Allagash.

A great effort went into preserving the Allagash as a place with wilderness character. If we can't follow through with that effort and protect what we have preserved in the past, how can we expect that our efforts to protect other places in the north woods today will succeed?

Those who want to find quiet, solitude, physical challenge, and naturalness in the woods represent a segment of society as do those who want easy, motorized access and who enjoy a less natural environment. Inherent in meeting these needs is the fact that to provide a wilderness experience it must necessarily exclude motors and their effects, too many people, and human developments. All user groups in a democratic society should rightly expect that their government should provide opportunities for their uses, especially when there is enough land to meet the competing needs. All user groups support their government financially and should expect fair and equitable treatment. Is this a selfish expectation? It would be if one group wants all the land and water for their particular use. Those who want wilderness experiences only want a fair share.

There is only one wild area like the Allagash in the Northeast while there are many opportunities for easy access to other lakes and rivers. In the Allagash within ten miles of the waterway, there are 40 boat launches on 70 lakes and ponds.

The preservation of special areas for their wilderness characteristics in order to provide wilderness experiences for the public is not elitist. It is just the opposite. Citizens can enjoy them regardless of income. The elitist image is one in which wealth or position allows one to either travel to pristine places out of reach of most people of ordinary means or allows one to buy up a large chunk of land for their own exclusive use and privacy. The Allagash is open to everyone who wants a wilderness experience, but it must be managed to provide such an experience.

This is absolutely not true. One has only to look at the votes for the bond issue which stated that the funds were to be used to "Develop the Maximum Wilderness Character of the Allagash Waterway." The vote was 68 percent for the bond issue and 32 percent against.

The majority of those testifying at the management plan hearings and

writing comments were in favor of limiting access to protect the wild aspects of the Allagash.

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