

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Shantha Ready Alonso, 760.408.0688 (mobile)

shantha@creationjustice.org



Christian Communities Rejoice Over New Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument
Public Lands Provide Havens for Families to Learn, Play, and Pray

Today, President Obama designated the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, a 87,500 acre property in Penobscot County in Northern Maine. The land was donated to the federal government by a nonprofit foundation called Elliotsville Plantation, Inc. In addition to the land, the foundation is also creating a \$40 million endowment to support the operations and maintenance of the new monument.

The Monument is situated in the shadow of Mount Katahdin, the tallest mountain in Maine, and it contains nationally significant forests and ponds. It is adjacent to the northern most terminus of the Appalachian Trail, and traverses four watersheds, including the East Branch of the Penobscot River, Seboeis River, and Sandy and Wassataquoik streams.

Veazie resident, United Church of Christ minister, and Convener of the Transformative Theology Working Group of Oikotree International Rev. Dr. Susan Davies said of the Monument, "Land connects us with one another, the Earth, and all her beings. It is thus with great joy that I hear of the establishment of Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. It will provide crucial habitat for threatened species and widen safe passage for large and small migrating animals, while also providing two-footeds space to hunt, camp, paddle, snowmobile, hike, fish and cross-country ski in a nationally significant forest, a green, blue, brown and often snowy land of ponds, rivers and streams, bi rds, bears and gnawing insects. (Not for nothing is the Black Fly, the state 'bird' of Maine.) Now we will have nearly 90,000 acres more of God's creation in which to explore and rejoice."

Creation Justice Ministries Executive Director Shantha Ready Alonso said, "When we set aside public lands of significance, we enhance our collective spiritual life, and our ability to create and share meaning. Not only will the Monument be a place where families and friends can make memories for a lifetime, it will also foster collective memory about the history of the land. The Monument will share the history of the Wabanaki people, to whom Mount Katahdin is sacred. It will also tell stories of early U.S. conservation movement leaders who enjoyed this area – including Henry David Thoreau and President Theodore Roosevelt, and interpret the history of logging and paper mills in Maine."

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Creation Justice Ministries represents the creation care policies of 38 Christian communions, including Baptists, mainline Protestants, Historically Black Churches, Peace Churches, and Orthodox communions. Learn more at www.creationjustice.org