



Burt's Bees Founder Wants To Donate National Park

by THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Land gift

Roxanne Quimby, founder of Burt's Bees cosmetics, wants to give the U.S. government more than 70,000 acres, to create a Maine Woods National Park.



SOURCES: James W. Sewall Company; ESRI AP

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Map shows Maine property that owner wants to donate for a national park

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Maine sportsmen were outraged when Roxanne Quimby, the conservation-minded founder of Burt's Bees cosmetics, bought up tens of thousands of acres of Maine's fabled North Woods — and had the audacity to forbid hunters, loggers, snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles on the expanses.

Quimby confronted the hornet's nest she'd stirred up head-on — calling one of her sharpest critics, George Smith, then-executive director of the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine. Smith couldn't believe his ears. The back-to-the-earth advocate who made millions with her eco-friendly line of personal care products was calling him at home, on a Saturday morning?

"I thought someone was playing a joke on me when she called," Smith recalls. "She said, 'Hi, this is Roxanne Quimby. I said, 'Oh yeah, sure.'"

That call in 2006 opened a face-to-face dialogue with some of her biggest critics over the land she's bought — more than 120,000 acres of woodlands.

Quimby wants to give more than 70,000 wild acres next to Maine's cherished Baxter State Park to the federal government, hoping to create a Maine Woods National Park. She envisions a visitor center dedicated to Henry David Thoreau, the naturalist who made three trips to Maine in the 1800s.

The park would be nearly twice the size of Maine's Acadia National Park.

In a giveback to sportsmen, her vision is to set aside another 30,000 acres of woodlands north of Dover-Foxcroft to be managed like a state park, with hunting and snowmobiling allowed.

"There's enough land that we can all get what we want," said Quimby.

The multi-millionaire disarmed her critics, who thought they'd have to deal with a patchouli-scented eccentric. What they found was a woman who thinks big, but is a pragmatic problem-

solver; someone who has strong ideals, but is willing to compromise; a self-made business woman who's willing to put up her own millions to achieve her conservation goals.



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In this photo made Jan. 28, 2011, signs welcome foot traffic but prohibits snowmobile and ATVs on land owned by Roxanne Quimby in Township 2, Range 8, Maine. Quimby, the founder of Burts Bees, wants to donate 70,000 acres to the federal government with the aim of creating a Maine Woods National Park.



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In this Jan. 28, 2011 photo, a gate prevents public snowmobile and ATV traffic from entering a former logging road on land owned by Roxanne Quimby in Township 2, Range 8, Maine.

of the Penobscot River, on which Thoreau enjoyed a ride in a flat-bottomed bateau on his last visit to the region in 1857.

Animal tracks crisscross the snow-covered land, evidence that it's teeming with wildlife, even during Maine's harsh winter. Moose have made figure-8's in the snow during their playful jousting. Smaller tracks indicate snowshoe hares, fisher cats and coyotes. Endangered Canada lynx also prowl the area.

Smith, for one, came to respect and admire her.

"I was one of her harshest critics, so it's really rather remarkable," he said. "In the end, it's her land and she'll do whatever suits her. But at least she's listening."

If she can win support, Quimby wants to time her donation in five years to the 100th anniversary of the creation of the National Park Service. It would be her gift, her legacy.

The Park Service is intrigued by Quimby's idea, especially since it believes the Northeast is underserved. The last time a large national park was created was in Alaska in the 1980s during the Carter administration.

"The National Park Service would like to see additional opportunities for preserving these beautiful places and creating recreational opportunities in the Northeast," said spokesman David Barna. "The proposal would be exciting for the National Park Service to evaluate."

The proposed national park land occupies a wild sprawl east of Baxter State Park. Much of it is covered with saplings as it recovers from logging operations that ended five years ago. Mountain ridges offer breathtaking views of Mount Katahdin, Maine's tallest mountain and the northern end of the Appalachian Trail.

At the eastern boundary is the East Branch



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In this March 14, 2011 photo, conservationist Roxanne Quimby poses in front of a 180-year-old map of Maine at her home, in Portland, Maine.



Associated Press

In this Jan. 28, 2011 photo, snowmobilers take in the scenery on a parcel of land sandwiched in between land owned by conservationist Roxanne Quimby in Township 5, Range 8, Maine.

conservation and the environment.

As Burt's Bees grew, she began buying land for conservation. Once again, she chose to buy in Maine.

"It was like putting money in the bank, as far as I was concerned. I had always had the feeling

A native of Massachusetts, Quimby was the black sheep of a family in which her father was an engineer and a salesman, and her sisters both earned their MBAs. Foregoing the business track, she went to art school in San Francisco, where she joined the "good life" back-to-the-land movement led by Helen and Scott Nearing.

With \$3,000 in savings, she and her boyfriend ended up in Maine in 1975 — not because of the state's rugged natural beauty but because the land was cheap.

They bought 30 acres in Guilford and built a cabin with an outhouse. They cut their own firewood. What staples they didn't grow, they bought in 60-pound bags.

Eventually, Quimby met beekeeper Burt Shavitz, the namesake whose bearded face appears on the labels of Burt's Bees lip balm, moisturizers and shampoos.

Quimby used Burt's bees wax to create candles she sold at craft fairs in 1984. In the first year, her company made \$20,000. The candles gained popularity in boutiques and specialty stores and within five years, there were 40 employees. In 1991, Burt's Bees introduced what remains its most popular product — lip balm made from bees wax.

As the business grew, Quimby did something that stabbed at the heart of Mainers: She moved her business out of Maine, which she said was a punishing place to do business.

She relocated to a windowless, climate-controlled building the size of a small Wal-Mart in a North Carolina industrial park. She eventually bought out Shavitz's shares.

Quimby made plenty of money without an MBA, moving easily between the business world and her passions for art, wildlife,

this land was really priceless. You know, forestland or any kind of undeveloped land. It just seemed like, 'What a bargain. They're selling it for \$200 an acre? You gotta be kidding me. It's priceless.'"



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In this Jan. 28, 2011 photo, clouds hide the summit of Mount Katahdin in Baxter State Park, in this view from land owned by Roxanne Quimby in Township 3, Range 8, Maine.

In 2003, she sold 80 percent of Burt's Bees for \$170 million, she said. The investor group told her she'd make that much again, when the remaining 20 percent was sold. And indeed, she made another \$180 million when she sold her remaining stake four years later to Clorox, which now owns Burt's Bees.

All of that money — roughly \$350 million — will buy a lot of land.

Quimby, now 60, says she always felt Maine tugging at her and later learned why. It is her spiritual home, where her forebears had settled. The Quimby name runs deep in Maine.

But to many Mainers, she'll always be "from away" — Maine's expression for an outsider — because she wasn't born here. And her vast land purchases continue to make some sportsmen uneasy because she's personally opposed to hunting, and the use of noisy and oil-consuming snowmobiles and ATVs.

Paul Reynolds, an outdoorsman and editor of the Northwoods Sporting Journal, was particularly alarmed late last year when Quimby was named to the National Park Foundation, which raises money to assist park service programs and acquisitions. The post could give her influence with the Park Service.



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In this Jan. 28, 2011 photo, land purchased by Roxanne Quimby shows the scars from a logging operation under a the previous owner in Township 2, Range 7. Maine.



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In this Jan. 28, 2011 photo, a lean-to on the International Appalachian Trail awaits hikers in Township 3, Range 8, Maine, on land owned by environmentalist Roxanne Quimby.



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In this Jan 28, 2011 photo, Wassataquoik Stream flows through Township 3, Range 8, Maine, on land owned by environmentalist Roxanne Quimby.

Reynolds believes that despite her concessions to sportsmen Quimby shouldn't be trusted because at her core she's opposed to hunting and motorized recreation. He's described her as a "clever tactician" and "a shrewd, self-made business woman" who knows how to get her way.

"I'm not convinced that she's had a turn of heart," Reynolds said.

Bob Meyers of the Maine Snowmobile Association sees things differently. He credits Quimby for opening a discussion with sporting groups and other stakeholders and for working to accommodate others' needs.

"The door kind of swung both ways. We have a pretty good relationship with her now. I think she feels the same way about us. We communicate on a regular basis. That's the way it should be," he said.

Things have changed since Quimby first started buying land.

The state's mighty paper mills have continued to struggle, and unemployment remains high. Vast tracts of land are changing hands. Seattle-based Plum Creek Timber Co. plans the largest subdivision in Maine history, smack dab in the Moosehead Lake region, part of the wilderness where Thoreau tromped.

Plum Creek's development plan reminded all that large, unspoiled tracts that aren't conserved could be turned into housing tracts by private landowners.

Quimby says a new national park would conserve land and create jobs by drawing millions of additional visitors to the region to stay and spend.

It remains to be seen whether Quimby is one day mentioned in the same breath as Percival Baxter, who donated the land that became Baxter State Park, or George Dorr, whose efforts helped create Acadia National Park.

These days, she lives most of the year in a



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In this photo made Monday, March 14, 2011, conservationist Roxanne Quimby poses next to white pine in Portland, Maine.

home built by the Baxter family in Portland, where one of her philanthropic organizations is creating an "artist-in-residence" program. Others distribute millions of dollars each year in Maine.

"I have a big imagination and I'm an artist and I went to art school, so I've fostered that sort of big-picture stuff. But I'm really interested in getting things done," she said.

Eugene Conlogue, town manager in Millinocket, said many outdoorsmen remain incensed over her restrictions on land they're accustomed to using for recreation, and for professional logging. But he sees a multi-faceted person.

"You can trust her word. She's one of these folks that if you shake her hand on a deal, then it's a deal," Conlogue said.