

**Agenda**  
**Greater East Grand Region Economic Planning**  
**Thursday, March 5, 2020 – Weston Town Office – 1:00 to 3:00**

**Water Trail Planning: The Baskahegan & Mattawamkeag**

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**Guests**

- Doug Beck, Outdoor Recreation Supervisor, Maine Bureau of Parks and Lakes
- Noah Pollock, Stewardship Director, Northern Forest Canoe Trail

**Greater East Grand Planning team members**

- Elbridge Cleaves – he will join us remotely
- Sue Szwed, Water Trails point person for GEGR planning
- Dwayne Young, Weston Town Manager
- Colin Brown, Executive Director, Woodie Wheaton Land Trust
- Dave Conley, Canoe the Wild, Maine Guide
- Steve Mine, Director, Maine Family Resource Center; Maine Guide
- Tami Matula, Outdoor Ed and Phys Ed Teacher, East Grand School
- Will Cliff, Teacher, East Grand School
- Sarah Strickland, Project Consultant

**1:00 Welcome and Introductions**

**1:10 Economic Planning Process Overview - Sarah**

**1:15 Review of Water Trails Planning Information to date – Elbridge**

**1:30 Baskahegan Water Trail – Pilot Project**

- Infrastructure priorities – parking
- Readiness for increased water trail use
- Campsite, launch and parking site maintenance options – short and long-term
- Funding to support ongoing maintenance
- Marketing and promotion best practices

**2:15 Mattawamkeag Water Trail – Development Project**

- Phase 1: Ground truthing – who, what, when, cost
- Identify continued development phases and realistic timeline
- Discuss funding opportunities

**2:45 Discussion: From our guests' perspectives and experiences, what is the most important development advice you can offer the East Grand planning effort?**

**3:00 Adjourn**

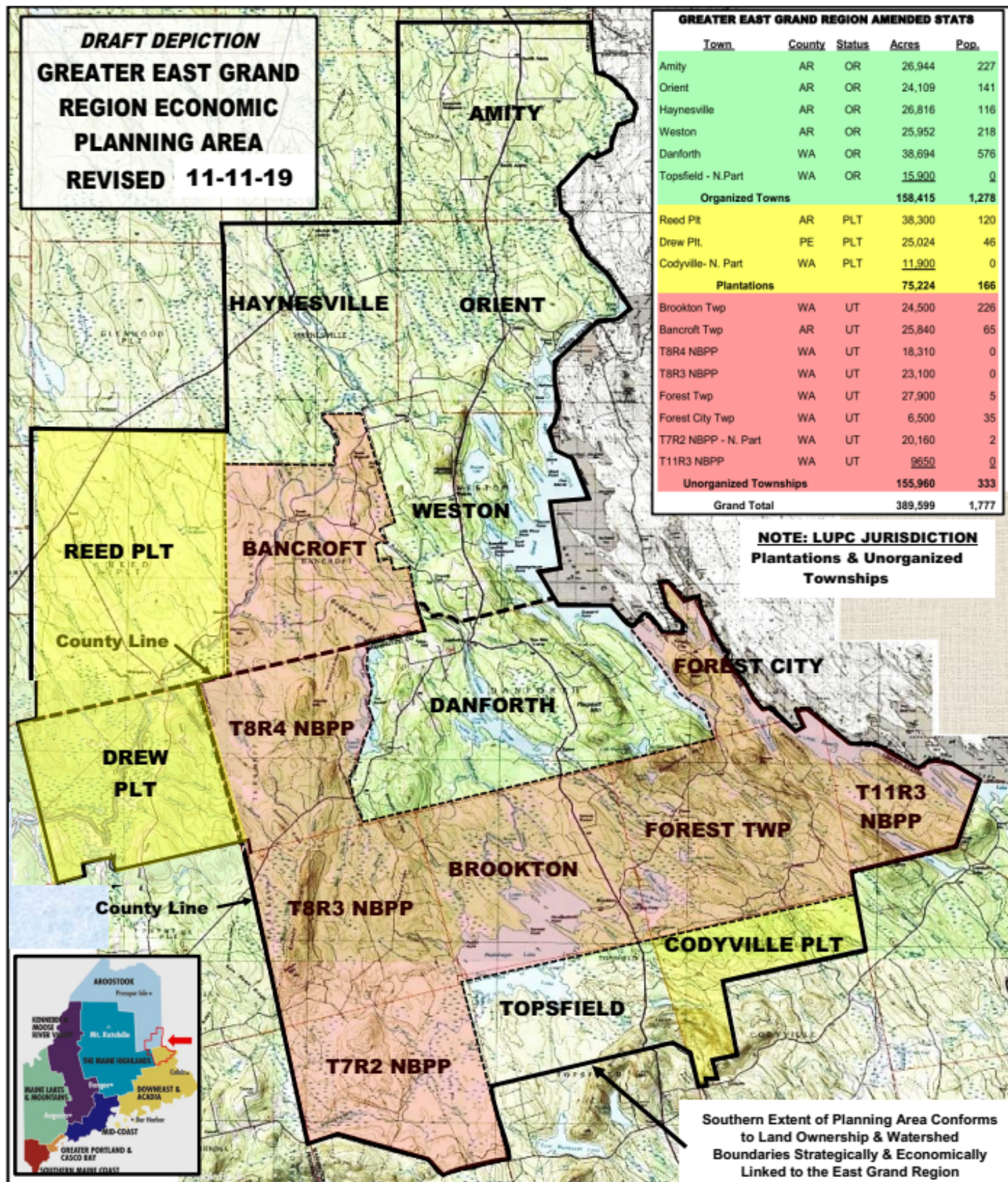
**DRAFT**  
**GREATER EAST GRAND REGION**  
**LIMITED FACT SHEET**  
**(See Map Attached)**

**Descriptives (Numbers rounded and in no order of significance)**

- Area in Acres: 400,000
- 85% Forested – Over 2/3<sup>rds</sup> family enity owned
- 60,000 acres conserved and/or public ownership
- Approximately 2,000 acres of fields – 20% actively farmed
- 30,000 Acres of lakes & ponds – 3 Watersheds –(St. Croix- Mattawamkeag - Baskahegan)
- 200 miles – Water trails (Within & adjacent to Region)
- 200 miles – Snowmobile & ATV Trails
- 6 miles hiking trails – Additional 10 miles in concept
- Jurisdictional: 6 Municipalities- 3 Plantations – 8 unorganized townships
- 3 Counties (Divided by Aroostook-Washington County Line)
- 3 State Marketing Areas
- 2 State Legislative Districts
- Local Service Center: Danforth
- East Grand School– 125 pupils K-12 – Project, Technology & Outdoor Based Learning
- Out of Region service centers – Houlton – Lincoln - Calais
- Population: Year-round: 1800 - Seasonal: 4000
- Lake Neighborhoods: 15 – 1200 Camps/Cottages (Including Fosterville NB)
- 12 Sporting Camps & Lodges
- On-going community improvement/development – Danforth
- On-going conservation & economic development– East Grand Lake - Weston
- Major east-west operating railway bisects region
- Scenic highway – natural landscapes – diverse topography
- 28 access points to public water (3 are in public ownership)

**Major Issues:**

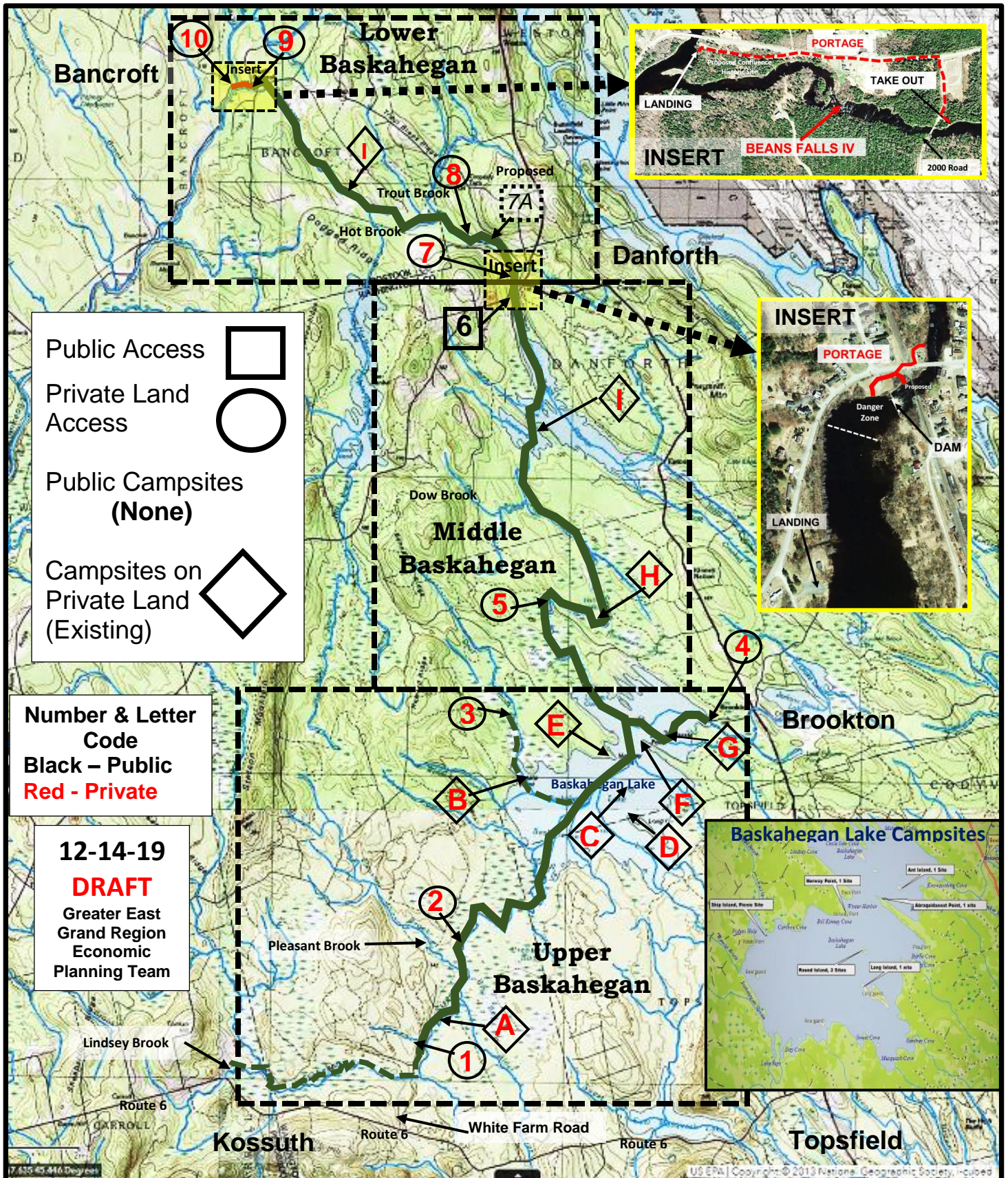
- Remote
- Sparsely populated
- Aging demographics
- Declining natural resource based economy
- Lacks region-wide high speed communication



Draft Date: February 21, 2020 – Greater East Grand Region Economic Planning Team

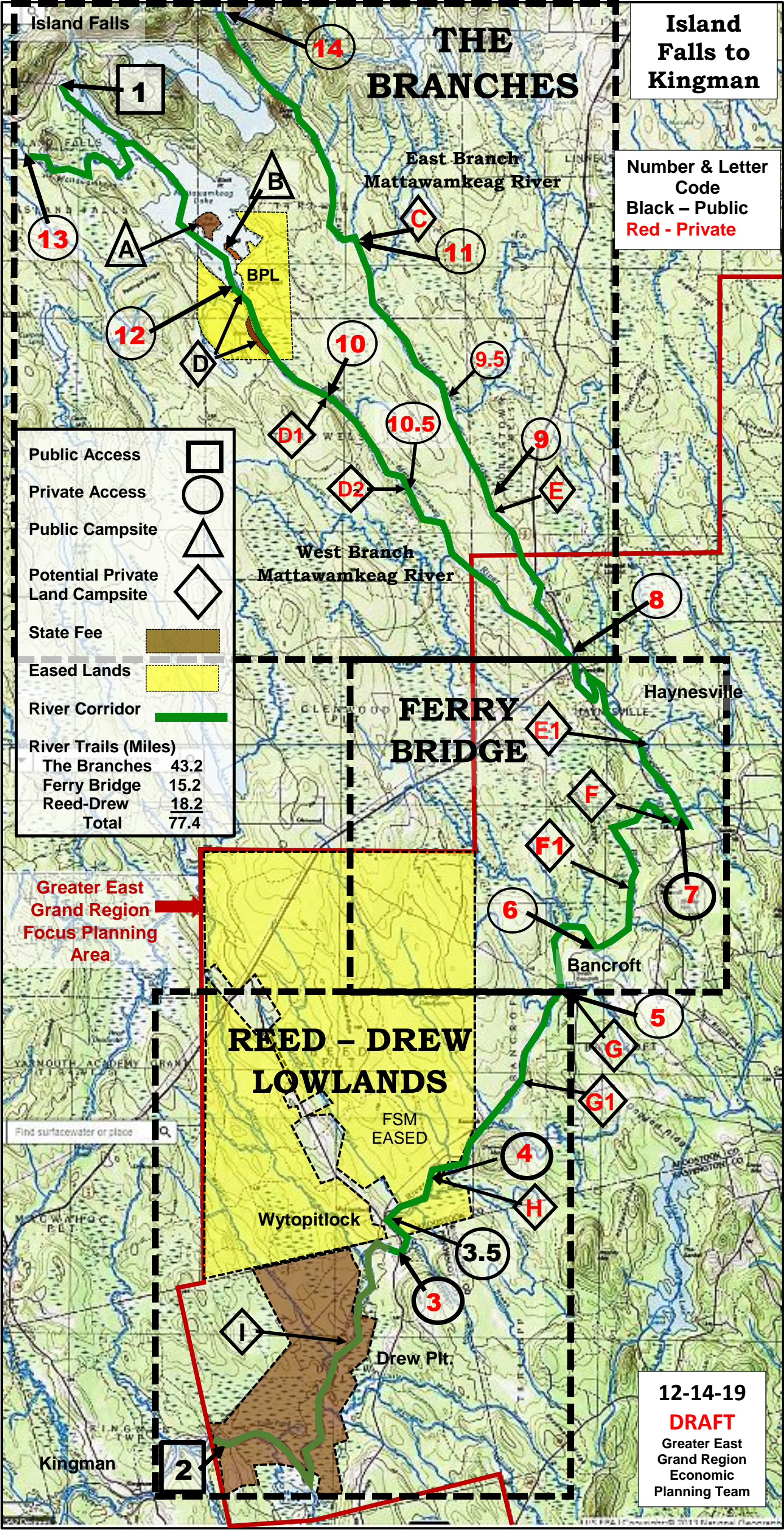


# BASKAHEGAN RIVER WATER TRAIL MAP DEPICTION





MIDDLE MATTAWAMKEAG RIVER - A WATER TRAILS CONCEPT



THIS MAP DEPICTION IS PREPARED FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY



# **DRAFT** **MEMORANDUM**

Date: February 4, 2020

To: GEGR Economic Planning Team

From: Elbridge

Re: Draft bulleted notes from trails et al Meeting – Baskahegan Office

Attending: Kyle B, Colin B, Sue S David C, Sarah S, Elbridge

A wide ranging 3 hour discussion with emphasis on linkage of recreational assets to economic development.

- Shared results of trails meeting in Weston and accompanying slide show
- General consensus with findings & notes from Weston Meeting
- Water trails
  - Uncertain water levels may dictate type of end use – DIY users, nature based trips serving existing and new outdoor oriented customer base
  - Need water trails caretaker/maintenance organization (s) -Landowners not an option
  - Need infrastructure development especially on Mattawamkeag - Baskahegan lacks designated parking areas, signage, and landowner approval to market
  - Push ahead under GEGR Planning Group with the development of the Baskahegan Water Trails as a pilot project
  - Similarly with the development of the Monument Brook “Birding Trail” but with WWLT in partnership with BPL and the adjacent state-owned Orient lands
  - Continue to engage all stakeholders including local citizens and public/NGO strategic planning assistance for pre-development planning of an overall strategic plan including phasing, landowner permission, funding, development and marketing including themes and narratives for each trail and major segment.
  - Ground truth existing and proposed access and campsites especially on Mattawamkeg
  - Consider envisioning a GEGR water trails project as part of a grand vision of all eastern Maine water trails- sort of a “Border Waters” version of “Boundary Waters”
  - Expect to develop “Confluence Heritage Site” on BCO lands at confluence of Baskahegan & Mattawamkeag Rivers in Bancroft. Seeking LUPC zone change – A CORE project with anticipated funding from Stetson Mtn.Fund at FSM
- Hiking Trails
  - A key DIY recreation activity in support of sporting camp & lodge customers/families
  - Expand EG Highlands to include loop around Sucker Lake – WWLT to continue to partner with Chamber on the project
  - WWLT also seeking to secure walking access and trail development to and on the Booming Grounds – a 500 acre IF&W reserve between Mud and Spednic Lakes (Mud lake falls, Native American Portages, Natural Communities)
  - Development of proposed hiking trails on TCF project lands in Weston on hold till conservation easement perfected in 2022 positioning trails for public funding (Proposed trail head at waterfront recreation area as part of Chadwick Pt. Project in Weston)
  - Confluence Project in Bancroft (above) has a has short hiking trail component
- Snowmobile Trails
  - Completed initial mapping and inventory of existing and proposed EGSC Trails teeing up a pending Club generated grant application to MCF for a “Phase 1” trails development project. (EGSC recently purchased a second trail groomer)
  - Heritage Loop proposal continues to show viability

- SCEC believes snowmobile trails are an asset that aligns best with outside tourism dollars –albeit as destination needs infrastructure such as lodging and other services
  - Snowmobile trails can also benefit existing and/or proposed service businesses – trail location and ease of access to those services are key
- ATV Trails
  - Upcoming meeting – February 20<sup>th</sup> – strategic discussion about linkage of clubs and trails within GEGR. State people in attendance to discuss ATV Task Force recommendations to legislature – size of machines, lack of funding, focus on connections. (Draft proposal of a motorized trail in proximity of Greenland Lakes totally scrapped)
- Agreed to a GEGR recommendation for a feasibility study to explore the concept of a multi-use off-road trail connecting Brookton with the Danforth area. No specific location beyond utilizing in some way the excess area in the recently cleared EMMC powerline ROW.
- Bike trails
  - Little discussion of road bike trails as envisioned fall of 2019. Some discussion ensued about creating a mountain bike “park” as development could be on an isolated parcel of land avoiding active logging and land management roads. Existing off road bike trails in the NE are mostly situated on public lands.
- Birding
  - As an outdoor recreation received some discussion over and above assigning a birding trail to Monument Brook. Noted that birders are generally well funded and somewhat to the high end for lodging and meals. Bird walks and organized tours with bird watching organizations are especially attractive. There is decent potential to attract current coastal clients to northern Maine with an organized tour. Spring to early summer is peak time.
- Camping
  - Determined camping facilities go hand in hand with DIY recreational trails especially during warmer climates hiking and paddling.
  - Camping also a supporter of existing service businesses like the Brookton General Store.
  - Some discussion about whether a campground is best structured for expansion of an existing business or a new entrepreneur.
  - Discussed a GEGR recommendation for a feasibility study focusing on the UT – basically Brookton area. Thinking modest size and geared for small rv’s and tents.
  - Decided to craft a GEGR recommendation for campground feasibility for both the Brookton (Baskahegan) and Reed – Bancroft – Haynesville Mattawamkeag area
  - Post Meeting - Unanswered questions
    - Campground impacts on existing sporting lodges – probably different clientele?
    - Same as per impact on Greenland Cove Campground – probably not significant?
    - What’s optimum type and size for profitability – seems 60 site minimum if stand-alone operation at one location – If at multiple locations what’s impact on type and size?
    - Potentially consider amending GEGR recommendation to a feasibility study for additional camping/campground facilities for the entire Region???
    - See come camping “quick hits” attached??
- Other??

Note: 2-3-2020 Sarah S, Elbridge C 1.5 hour meeting with Buck Plummer pending separate Memo (Discussed campground idea, multi-use off-road trail feasibility study and boat landing at Arm of East Grand Lake)

**DRAFT  
MEMORANDUM**

Date: January 28, 2020

To: GEGR Economic Planning Group

By: Elbridge – Member of Planning Team

Re: Initial Strategic Review of Recreational Trails in the GEGR

Attending: Sarah Strickland, Sue Szwed, David Conley, Dwayne Young, Judy Cleaves, Elbridge Cleaves – (Sue and David are recreation guides- David is owner of “Canoe the Wild”)

A meeting was held at the Weston Town Office to review draft map depictions, resource information and recently acquired knowledge about recreational trails and implications for the GEGR. The primary objectives were to flesh out strategic uses, potential benefits including personal and economic, and to identify key issues for further deliberation.

A home-grown 35 page slide show focused the group’s attention on water trails, but included placeholder information about hiking, snowmobiling, ATV, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing within and around the GEGR. (Slide Show in PDF available by email upon request--Potential road biking trails have been mapped but not part of presentation)

The show highlighted eleven (11) major water trail segments totaling nearly 190 miles of flowing and flat water along with the capture of basic access and campsite information. (See attached map and water trails summary and characterizations) The Baskahegan, Mattawamkeag and St. Croix Rivers are the primarily river drainages with Reed Deadwater (Macwahoc Stream) and Monument Brook added for potential in nature-based tourism.

Observations for paddling/fishing:

- Initial inventory of waters and existing and potential locations for access and campsites seems generally comprehensive but not exhaustive. (Does not include second order streams such as Skagrock and Wytovitlock)
- Significant variations exists in the nature, type, volume of water and availability by drainage and by segment. The St. Croix with large lakes and a tail water has fairly consistent water flows/availability; caveat during loon nesting when may have low water below Vanceboro until July 15<sup>th</sup>. The flat to gently flowing water on the lower sections of the Mattawamkeag and Baskahegan are likely to have water most of the year, but need monitoring. While the Branches and Upper and Middle Sections of the Baskahegan are the most wild and remote they are (with exception of the lakes) highly prone to dewatering during the summer. Of the foregoing the West Branch of the Mattamkeag is most dependable during low flows. The East Branch is a highly scenic and fast moving freestone stream. Reed Deadwater and Monument are flat water and are most always navigable regardless of water flow. Monument is impacted by the dam at Forest City on East Grand Lake.
- Notoriety, status of infrastructure and market exposure are as diverse as the waters themselves. The Mattawamkeag River lags far behind the Baskahegan and St. Croix in existing infrastructure (access and campsites...albeit the St. Croix is one-Country Camping). The Baskahegan and Mattawamkeag are also infants compared to the St. Croix in notoriety, use and marketing. Of note, much of the infrastructure is in-place on the Baskahegan, thanks to the generous permissive use granted by the Baskahegan Company and successive years of campsite funding and improvement thru the Stetson MT fund at the Forest Society of Maine and the Outdoor Education students at East Grand School.



- (Of Note, Diano Circo (IF&W) recently confirmed interest in exploring the establishment of formal public boat/fishing access in the Ferry Bridge and Reed-Drew Lowlands sections of the Mattawamkeag River.
- Continue with the development of boat access/canoe/kayak put-ins, potential campsites and other infrastructure as funding, landowner permission, volunteers and time allows.
- All waters are fishable. As flowing waters warm, lower sections revert to warm water species. The Branches and tributaries excel in brook trout and to a lesser degree landlocked salmon. Flat waters, other than East Grand, tend toward bass, perch and warm water species. Baskahegan Lake and Crooked Brook Flowage are standouts.
- Public ownership generally non-existent. Exception being Big Island and Long Point on Mattawamkeag Lake and the Page Farm within the Mattawamkeag River WMA.

#### Economic Observations

- All waters have a history of a high level of Native American and early European settler usage including connectivity to NB tribes, establishment of settlements and lumbering. The cultural and historic nature of these waters should be an important consideration in promotion, marketing and in development of themes and narratives.
- With proper marketing these waters may have potential to attract “new tourism” but the most critical element may be in helping to provide recreational diversity to an existing, but changing customer base at area sporting camps and lodges.
- Development of nature based tourism will require training and education of existing and/or new guides, and/or importation of coastal guides, all to be as proficient with geography as they are with ecology.
- Traditional marketing of site specific “trips” by filling the roster with customers well in advance of departure may be problematic with all of the uncertainty in water levels. Much flexibility will be required. Day trips that are pre-engineered and packaged and offered on demand at area sporting camps and lodges may be more practical, if not more predictable but less lucrative.
- Used Future IQ vision of tourism in the northwoods to help brainstorm economic considerations
- Development of an outdoor recreational outfitter and equipment provider is a necessity. Consider expansion/diversification of an existing business and/or developing a new entrepreneur.

#### Outstanding Issues/Observations/Questions

- A lot to assimilate, process and prioritize. Need expert advice as to all: process, timeline, funding and development.
- Assume must have caretaker organization(s). Structure, role, area of responsibility (probably separated by major drainage)??
- Need to further explore and increase nexus to economic development including linkage to workforce training, diversification of existing businesses, entrepreneurship and marketing.
- Sue Szwed to continue as point person with BPL, NPS, Island Falls planner and others
- Refine all to finite recommendations in the forthcoming economic plan
- Other?