

Report by Elbridge Cleaves on behalf of the Greater East Grand Economic Region Steering Committee & initial Planning Team

Getting Started – April

- Consensus to proceed at Exploratory Meeting in April
- Conducted substantive research on economic planning in rural America
- Best approach: citizen driven asset-based mapping
- Developed and revised a map of the Planning Area/Region
- Drafted a compelling narrative for funders
- Began draft Google Earth mapping and data mining such as: access to public water, land ownership, recreational trails (water-hiking-motorized), natural features and resources, broadband service, location and acreage of farmlands, lake neighborhoods, rural residential areas, planning jurisdictions and barriers

Relationship building & “Low Hanging Fruit”(Small projects)

- Initiated contacts with MDIF&W about water access within the Region
- Got involved with Forest City Dam – Partnered with CLIC, issued press releases, conducted interviews with TV and MP Radio and offered FERC testimony at hearing in Danforth
- Held introductory planning meetings with Reed Plt. and Town of Haynesville
- Met on-site (twice) with IF&W on Mattawamkeag River boat and canoe/kayak access in Drew, Reed and Haynesville – coordinated with Weston & Danforth regarding Baskahegan River.
- Chaired an Upper St. Croix River fisheries Meeting with DFP at Rideouts
- Obtained \$10,000 gross in-kind contribution toward project by SCEC and NMDC
- Drafted a set of area on-road bike trails for consideration by Jay Kamm at NMDC
- Began heritage and canoe launch project below Beans Falls in Bancroft (Substantial LUPC Zoning implications)
- Obtained SCEC approval of contracted Project Director – Total budget of \$45,000 - \$30,000 cash portion

Fund Raising

- Made application and obtained approval of a \$10,000 grant from WC TIF (Joint application by CORE and Greater East Grand Lake Chamber of Commerce)
- Conducted private and corporate fund raising with donations of \$8,500
- Filed grant application to MCF for \$10,000 (December announcement - dicey)

Began Official Planning Process

- Formal start of Project Director – November 1st -Issued formal press release
- Finalizing process of asset identification and area meetings
- Obtained ongoing advice and council from the Southern Aroostook Development Corporation about “how to” do the work of economic development

- Began assembly of GIS digital map data through UM Machias (No charge)
- Held planning meeting with area snowmobile clubs – drafting recommendations for plan
- (Will hold similar meeting with area ATV Clubs later this winter)

Next Steps - Sarah Strickland – Project Director

December – February

- Complete meetings with select persons/towns/organizations.
- Complete Asset Mapping data collection and GIS Mapping with UMM.
- Continue meetings with State and regional agencies
- Identify potential economic development projects for every jurisdiction
- Assemble information about community development projects
- Gather information about state-wide initiatives to help with implementation.
- Draft preliminary assessment summary and emerging recommendations for broad based discussions with stakeholders.

February - April

- Meet with business development group from SADC, SCEC, local entrepreneurs, etc.
- Hold community meetings to review assessment and gather recommendations.
- Complete next draft of feasibility plan and review with Steering and Planning committees.

April – May

- Finalize plan.
- Communicate plan and priorities to communities and seasonal residents.
- Initiate search for local Economic Development Coordinator for region.