

August 14, 2019

Ms. Susan Hatton, Program Manager
Sunrise County Economic Council
1 College Drive
Calais, Maine 04619

Re: Greater East Grand Region - Washington County TIF District Application for Planning Funding

Dear Susan:

Please find enclosed the application for the Greater East Grand Region planning grant for Citizens Organization for Rural Education in partnership with the Greater East Grand Lake Chamber of Commerce. The grant request is for \$10,000 toward the funding of a project manager to develop a written economic feasibility report for Region including the UT Towns in Washington County. The overall budget including like-kind is \$45,000. The towns and townships within the current planning area are as follows:

GREATER EAST GRAND CURRENT ECONOMIC PLANNING REGION			
<u>Town/Township</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Area in Acres</u>
Amity	Aroostook	Organized	26,944
Orient	Aroostook	Organized	24,109
Haynesville	Aroostook	Organized	26,483
Weston	Aroostook	Organized	19,590
Bancroft Twp	Aroostook	Unorganized	25,840
Reed Plt	Aroostook	Plantation	38,300
Drew Plt. East	Penobscot	Plantation	10,250
Danforth	Washington	Organized	38,694
Brookton Twp	Washington	Unorganized	24,500
T8R4 NBPP	Washington	Unorganized	18,310
T8R3 NBPP	Washington	Unorganized	23,100
Forest Twp-WP	Washington	Unorganized	27,000
Forest City Twp	Washington	Unorganized	<u>4,500</u>
			307,620

We appreciate your assistance with this application. Please feel free to contact Sarah Strickland or myself if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Elbridge Cleaves, President
Citizens Organization for Rural Education

Washington County TIF District Application for Funding

Sunrise County Economic Council • 7 Ames Way • Machias, ME 04654 • 207-255-0983

Please indicate which program you are applying for funding from:

- ☐ Nature-Based Tourism Grant
 ☐ County Grant-Matching Program
☒ Economic Development Planning Funds
 ☐ Capital Project Fund

For the Capital Project Fund, please contact the Washington County Commissioners. A preliminary request form also is available online at www.washingtoncountymaine.com/tif.

Name of applying individual, business, or organization: **Citizens Organization for Rural Education (CORE)**

Please check which type of organization is applying for funds:

- ☐ Private enterprise
 ☒ 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
☐ Community organization. Fiscal sponsor: _____
☐ Government entity. Please specify: _____

This project is being pursued by:

- ☐ One business or organization
 ☒ **A collaboration between:** CORE; Greater East Grand Lake Chamber of Commerce; Machias Savings Bank (Danforth); Town of Danforth; Town of Weston; East Grand School

One-line description of your project: **East Grand Regional Economic Planning Project is a six month effort to develop a written economic feasibility report for the Greater East Grand Economic Planning Region.**

Dollar amount requested: **\$10,000** Total project budget: **\$45,000**

Unorganized Territory(ies) in which project will occur: **Forest City, Forest, Brookton, T8R3 NBPP, T8R4 NBPP as the Northern Washington portion of a Twelve Town/Township region in the Northern Washington and Southern Aroostook County area. The Town of Danforth serves as the service center.**

Have you applied for applicable licenses and permits for your project (LURC, DEP, DHHS, etc.)? Please

list: **Not Applicable.**

Washington County TIF District Application for Funding

Please fill out all sections completely as instructed. If a section does not apply to the type of funding for which you are applying, that will be noted below.

I. Applicant Information

Legal name of organization: Citizens Organization for Rural Education (CORE)

Mailing address: P.O. Box 282, Danforth, ME 04424

Physical address: President: 363 US Route 1, Weston, ME 04424

Telephone: President: 207-557-9474

Email: President: egcleaves@pwless.net
V. President: dwayneyoung267@hotmail.com

Website: None

Number of years business/agency in existence: 5 years

Number of paid staff: None Number of volunteers: 25+ project dependent

Federal Tax I.D. or EIN: 81-1557669

President or Executive Director: Elbridge Cleaves

Board president (if applicable): John Ribe

Telephone: 207-448-2913 Email: jhribe@reagon.com

Amount requested from Washington County TIF Funds for this project: \$10,000

Total project budget: \$45,000

A 200-word (maximum) description of your project

The purpose of this grant application is to seek \$10,000 of funding for a six-month project manager's position to perfect, assemble and publish an economic roadmap for the Greater East Grand Region. The projected cash cost of the project is \$30,000. The total budget is \$45,000 including in-kind contributions.

The Greater East Grand Region in Eastern Maine is remote, sparsely populated, and encompasses nearly 300,000 acres. This area, situated at the extremities of three (3) counties is divided in half by the Washington - Aroostook county line and is evenly split between organized towns and unorganized townships. Five of the six unorganized townships are located in Washington County.

The town of Danforth, the area's service center, is the largest of twelve small communities in the region, and is home to a branch office of the Machias Savings Bank.

Partnering organizations include Citizens Organization for Rural Education, Machias Savings Bank, East Grand School, the Towns of Danforth and Weston and the Greater East Grand Lake Chamber of Commerce. Sunrise County Economic Council is the lead regional planning agency, with assistance from the Northern Maine Development Commission. Area citizens have logged nearly 1000 hours of volunteer time toward this project since mid-March.

II. Jobs and geographic region

For the purposes of the grant decision process, projects that will directly create or retain jobs will score 1 point per job. Jobs are measured as full-time equivalent (FTE) based on 2080 hours per year. (Example: a job that creates two full-time jobs for six months equals one FTE.) For more information on scoring of this application, please see the Base Conditions Scoring System in Appendix A.

Number of jobs to be created or retained through this project: 1 after the planning phase is complete

Types of jobs and number of each:

Job title: Economic Development Coordinator No. of jobs: 1 Length of job: Ongoing

Please include any other information you may have about job creation during your project and your projections for the future:

While the Project Manager will be a contracted position one of the major thrusts of the project will be to build capacity for an economic development coordinator after the planning phase. That person would work with organizations and communities to secure funding for projects both located in the UT and in organized towns. Focus areas for development and employment will be entrepreneurship and micro business through workforce training. Those businesses would be focused on developing capacity for nature tourism, eco-tourism, increased local agriculture and use of native wood and products from area forests. Construction post planning would include expanding and improving recreational infrastructure such as a waterfront recreation area, new and improved hiking, ATV and snowmobile trails, feasibility studies and resulting development of small RV parks and campgrounds, restoration of heritage assets and removal of physical blight.

III. Financial Information

**Fiscal year start and end dates: From January to December for 2016-2018
YTD through July for 2019**

Citizens Organization for Rural Education Financial Statement
Income Statement from January, 2016 – July 31, 2019
501c3

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>INCOME:</u>					
Sale of goods & Services	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Individuals & Businesses	\$ 2,929.26	\$ 7,780.00	\$ 5,035.00	\$ 2,330.00	\$18,074.26
Foundations	\$ 2,824.32	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 3,525.00	\$17,849.32
Government Funding	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Personal Funds	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Interest Income	\$.10	\$ 2.66	\$.46	\$ 0	\$ 3.22
Other	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 138.48</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 138.48</u>
<u>TOTAL INCOME:</u>	<u>\$ 5,753.68</u>	<u>\$11,921.14</u>	<u>\$12,535.46</u>	<u>\$ 5,855.00</u>	<u>\$36,065.28</u>
<u>EXPENSES:</u>					
Administration	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Labor	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Supplies	\$ 306.84	\$ 62.00	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 368.84
Equipment	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Fundraising Costs	\$ 0	\$ 500.00	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 500.00
Other: Middle School Weekend	\$ 2,829.01	\$ 3,251.79	\$ 5,309.57	\$ 2,068.80	\$13,459.17
Accounting	\$ 0	\$ 440.08	\$ 145.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 735.08
Economic Impact	\$ 0	\$ 7,350.00	\$ 2,467.54	\$ 0	\$ 9,817.54
Outdoor Classroom	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 94.89	\$ 65.57	\$ 160.46
Harlow Trail	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 3,104.43</u>	<u>\$ 2,252.97</u>	<u>\$ 5,357.40</u>
<u>TOTAL EXPENSES:</u>	<u>\$ 3,135.85</u>	<u>\$11,603.87</u>	<u>\$11,121.43</u>	<u>\$ 4,537.34</u>	<u>\$30,398.49</u>

It should be noted that thousands of hours of volunteer time from workers and their equipment are not included in any figures. Included in those workers are: students, teachers, staff, administrators, bus drivers, school board members, chaperones, guides, parents, home school parents, Alumni Members, community members, businesses, and professionals.

2018 Financial Information

Citizens Organization for Rural Education 501c3

Fiscal year start and end dates: From January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018

Revenues and Expenses for Enterprises Currently in Business

2018 Revenue

Income from sale of goods & services	\$ 0
Grants and donations:	
Individuals & Businesses	\$ 5,035.00
Foundations	\$ 7,500.00
Government Funding	\$ 0
Personal Funds	\$ 0
Interest Income	\$.46
TOTAL REVENUE	\$12,535.46

2018 Expenses

Administration	\$ 0
Labor	\$ 0
Supplies	\$ 0
Equipment	\$ 0
Fundraising Costs	\$ 2,467.54
Other: Accounting	\$ 145.00
Weekend Trip for East Grand Middle School	
Students, Chaperones, Guides	
Included: Tenting Sites, Rafting Trip, Hiking	
Trip and Food	\$ 5,309.57
Building Harlow Ski & Snowshoe Trail	\$ 3,199.32
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$11,121.43
NET (REVENUE – EXPENSES)	\$ 1,414.03

If any shortfalls occurred, please explain how they were financed:

Many hours of donated labor and equipment. No charge.

Assets and Liabilities for Last Fiscal Year From: 1/1/2018 to 12/31/2018

2018

Assets		Liabilities	
Cash Beg. Balance	\$ 2,935.10	Accounts Payable	\$ 11,121.43
Cash End. Balance	\$12,535.46		
Property & Equipment	\$ 0	Long term Liabilities	
Accounts Receivable	\$ 0		
Investments	\$ 0		
Other (please list):			
Total Assets	\$ 15,470.56	Total Liabilities	\$ 11,121.43
Balance on Hand 12/31/18	\$ 4,349.13	(\$1,750 encumbered until 2019)	
Restricted Assets or Revenue (explain):			
\$3,500 foundation grant is over 2 years. \$1,750 to be spent in 2018; \$1,750 to be spent in 2019			

IV. Project budget

East Grand Regional Economic Planning Project Budget

Project Deliverables

1. Prepare a written regional economic feasibility study that:
 - Utilizes available product and progress from 2019 regional planning efforts prior to execution of contract
 - Completes comprehensive asset mapping with all key stakeholders and communities in the region;
 - Identifies the major goals and strategies for economic development in the region;
 - Identifies priority projects and required investment.
2. Identify how to build and maintain the organizational capacity to sustain the initiatives.
3. Identify funding strategies for both short and long-term projects.
4. Prepare the final study document for dissemination and presentation to key stakeholders.

Professional Services

Project management with Steering Committee
 Facilitate community meetings for asset mapping
 Facilitate Steering Committee meetings
 Identify and pursue information and resources relevant to the project goals
 Prepare updates, meeting summaries, etc.
 Prepare drafts and final report for review and approval

Project Expenses

Professional services as described above	20000
Travel	5000
Committee/Office expenses	2500
Community communications and reporting	2500
Total Project Expenses	<u>\$ 30,000</u>

Project Revenue Sources

Private Donations	10000
TIFF Grant	10000
Other Foundation Grants	5000
In-Kind services	5000
	<u>\$ 30,000</u>

Additional In-Kind Resources

SCEC/NMDC in-kind resources	10000
CORE/Chamber volunteer in-kind resources	5000
	<u>\$ 15,000</u>

Total Project Budget	\$ 45,000
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V. Sustainability plan

What are your plans to ensure continuation of this project or business and to secure funding in the future? Please list at least three strategies.

During the planning project several different approaches will be evaluated for sustainability and a plan prepared as part of the project's final report. The three identified options as of this date are:

Strategy #1 - Utilize the model of an economic development coordinator, someone who knows every business owner, building owner, and planning effort of the region. A person connected with the regional and statewide economic development people, small business development, has a working knowledge of business support, the grant and foundation leg, incentive programs and educational opportunities for potential entrepreneurs in the region. These connections create the foundation of the actual work of an ED coordinator; leveraging resources and finding and nurturing communities and organizations to take on projects that accomplish planning goals. Funding of this position will be from foundations, public grants and philanthropy utilizing municipalities, Chamber of Commerce, CORE and other organizations within and outside of the Region.

Strategy #2 - Satellite Development Office - Open a field office for economic development under the auspices of a partnership between SSEC and NMDC. While this potential has been explored in the past with mixed results, the Greater East Grand Planning effort may provide the momentum and platform necessary to establish a formal presence in the region.

Strategy #3 - Create an economic development entity utilizing the planning group of participating organizations as initial sources of volunteers while seeking funding for a part-time coordinator working in conjunction with the Maine Family Resource Center.

VI. Project narrative

You may use the spaces below each major section, or you may include a separate page. Please do not exceed one typed page (minimum 11-point type) for each section.

History of your company or organization (founding date, mission, area and number served, top products or services):

Citizens Organization for Rural Education (CORE) began in 2014 as a grass roots organization working to create a partnership between East Grand School and the two-district communities of Danforth and Weston. CORE is a small organization, no paid staff, and the work is primarily one of information, coordination and support. Joint accomplishments with the school include strategic planning, construction of an outdoor classroom on donated land, a garden center, curriculum development, teacher training, off-site middle school outings, the Harlow Trail (a school-community service project), and assistance in developing the natural resources pathway options for aspiring students. The Harlow Trail marked a multi-year effort by CORE to develop a community service, recreational and educational trail; a partnership involving East Grand students, the Town of Danforth, and the landowner, Baskahegan Company.

CORE also works in the community. The organization obtained funding and contracted with Sunrise County Economic Council to conduct a local economic impact analysis in the event that part or all of the school has to be closed. Findings show a substantial economic hit to the area if local education fails in Danforth and Weston. CORE has obtained funding from The Maine Community Foundation, the Davis Conservation Foundation, and the Stetson Mountain Fund of the Forest Society of Maine, New England Grassroots Environmental Fund, key area landowners and many local citizens. CORE entirely operates on volunteerism from its board and officers to the many volunteers that assist with projects. The Harlow Trail and Middle School Outing have in-kind contributions of time and equipment that exceed actual out of pocket costs. Volunteers include students, student mentors, teachers, and adults from the surrounding communities.

The Greater East Grand Lake Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1998 as a way to promote area businesses and to draw new businesses to the area. The primary area served is comprised of Danforth, Orient, Weston, Bancroft Twp., Brookton and Forest City Twp.

Over the years the Greater East Grand Lake Area Chamber of Commerce has supported many community and area functions beyond the normal chamber of commerce business. It has provided financial support for a local summer concert series, development and improvements in partnership with the Woodie Wheaton Land Trust for the East Grand Highlands Hiking Trail, created a promotional video for the region and maintained a public informational building in Danforth.

The Chamber prints a brochure showcasing local businesses and distributes it throughout the local area, the Maine Tourism Association and a half-dozen other chambers statewide. It maintains a website and social media presence. The Chamber has no paid employees, thus operates on volunteerism. Its website is located at <https://www.eastgrandlake.net/>.

The region (as previously described) has a year-round population of approximately 1,250. The area is home to eleven lakes and two rivers with about 1,200 seasonal cottages, the population swells to several thousand in the summer months.

Overview of the project for which you seek funding (1. overall goal; 2. how this project will strengthen your organization; 3. up to three measurable outcomes that will help achieve your goal; 4. specific activities to complete the project):

This project is to help fund and bring to completion an economic planning effort as the first real attempt to address rural decline in the Greater East Grand area on a regional basis. The six-month long project is to provide critical professional assistance to local citizens (all volunteers) in perfecting, assembling and publishing an economic roadmap for the Greater East Grand Region. The funds associated with this application will be leveraged three-fold thru private donations and at least two Maine foundations having a history of funding projects in the East Grand area.

Sarah Strickland has agreed to serve as project manager under contract with Sunrise County Economic Council--the same scenario as the school economic impact study. Sarah has extensive knowledge of the area from past and ongoing work with the East Grand Clinic, East Grand School, The Conservation Fund and CORE. Local partnering organizations include Citizens Organization for Rural Education, Machias Savings Bank, East Grand School, the Towns of Danforth and Weston and the East Grand Lake Chamber of Commerce. Sunrise County Economic Council is the lead economic organization, with partnering from the Northern Maine Development Commission.

Citizens from across the area have logged nearly 1000 hours of volunteer time toward this project since mid-march. Meetings since mid-April have led to the formation of a working group and steering committee, a set of printed goals and objectives, a SWOT analysis and the initial phases of asset mapping. Electric data files accumulated since February of 2019 include 32 map depictions, 38 files of notes and work product, and 26 files of shared background material about rural economic development.

Planning outcomes to be achieved include building a strong base of citizen support, cultivating robust relationships with outside sources of assistance and funding, developing a written feasible economic plan with specific project recommendations and maps, and a capacity building pathway for future project development. Ongoing efforts include meetings with stakeholders across the region, monthly meetings of the planning group to further the planning process and product. Supported activities include removal of physical blight, developing nature-based recreational infrastructure, utilizing conservation as an economic tool, and maintaining and growing existing business. Longer term goals include seeking to build businesses thru entrepreneurship, maintaining and growing existing businesses, workforce training for local jobs, developing nature-based recreational infrastructure, expanding local services to lake neighborhood customers, improve existing local agriculture, concentrate on connectivity to place and heritage in tourism efforts, and become a credible voice of advocacy for the region.

Who will be served by this project? **Please see Attachment A**

Township/region: _____

Age range of those served: _____

Approximate number: _____

Plan for evaluating the success of this project:

The success of this project will be measured in the following ways:

1. Fulfillment of the funding plan for project manager;
2. Participation and engagement in the asset mapping and other discussions by the different communities/residents in the region;
3. To have in-hand and in circulation a completed economic planning/feasibility report for the Greater East Grand Region;
4. The execution of a funding plan and engagement of a development coordinator for the region; and
5. A completed set of economic development recommendations at the end of five-year and ten-year accountability periods.

VII. Signature - Must be original, not photocopied.

Signature of president, chief executive officer, or board president (nonprofits)

Date

Elbridge Cleaves
Print name

CORE President
Title

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: **MAR 04 2016**

CITIZENS ORGANIZATION FOR RURAL
EDUCATION
PO BOX 252
DANFORTH, ME 04424-0000

Employer Identification Number:
81-1557669
DLN:
26053460003496
Contact Person:
CUSTOMER SERVICE ID# 31954
Contact Telephone Number:
(877) 829-5500
Accounting Period Ending:
December 31
Public Charity Status:
509(a)(2)
Form 990/990-EZ/990-N Required:
Yes
Effective Date of Exemption:
September 16, 2015
Contribution Deductibility:
Yes
Addendum Applies:
No

Dear Applicant:

We're pleased to tell you we determined you're exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Donors can deduct contributions they make to you under IRC Section 170. You're also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522. This letter could help resolve questions on your exempt status. Please keep it for your records.

Organizations exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3) are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined you're a public charity under the IRC Section listed at the top of this letter.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that you're required to file Form 990/990-EZ/990-N, our records show you're required to file an annual information return (Form 990 or Form 990-EZ) or electronic notice (Form 990-N, the e-Postcard). If you don't file a required return or notice for three consecutive years, your exempt status will be automatically revoked.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that an addendum applies, the enclosed addendum is an integral part of this letter.

For important information about your responsibilities as a tax-exempt organization, go to www.irs.gov/charities. Enter "4221-PC" in the search bar to view Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, which describes your recordkeeping, reporting, and disclosure requirements.

Letter 5436

An Introduction To **THE GREATER EAST GRAND REGION** **ECONOMIC PLANNING GROUP** “A Heritage Reclaimed”

The lowland forests and wetlands of the Mattawamkeag, the ridges overlooking the valley of the Baskahegan, and the highlands and lakes of the Upper St. Croix comprise a geographic region rich in natural resources. This diverse landscape, favored for gain and sustenance by Native Americans became a similar draw for Europeans who once hailed from the shores of Great Britain and beyond.

One of the earliest written records of non-native Americans in the region was the 1689 capture of John Gyles by the Micmac Indians. By the year 1820, early settlers, lumbermen by trade and farmers by necessity, began to carve homesteads from the forests and establish communities along the waterways. US Route 2A (the Military Road) was constructed along the western edge of the region as a stage and military supply route between Bangor and Houlton in 1832. Route 2A became a business corridor thru the heart of the Mattawamkeag basin prior to Interstate 95. US Route 1, the Houlton-Calais Road, situated on the high land along the St. Croix and within the eastern part of the Baskahegan valley had been surveyed by 1826. Actual road construction languished as recorded in the Washington County Petition of the same date; *“Nothing has been done by the proprietors to open the road which prevents communication with settlers of our northern part of the County”*. It was not until 1871, following the construction of the North American and European railroad thru the central part of the region, that the area truly experienced population growth and an economic boom.

This landscape and people, nourished by its rivers and lakes, is now served by some of the State’s less traveled roadways. It is home to ten (10) widely distributed small communities, linked through heritage and separated by township-sized wildlands. Rural and remote, this area of nearly 300,000 acres in Eastern Maine shares a forty (40) mile long watery international boundary with western New Brunswick. This boundary, called an imaginary line, runs from Monument One down the meandering thread of the headwaters of the east branch of the St. Croix River on thru East Grand to Spednic Lake and beyond. (Attached depiction of the Greater East Grand Region)

Some believe out-migration, aging population, political divisions and a diminishing natural resource-based economy have destined us to a declining quality of life. Our demographics (based on average age) include some of the oldest towns in Maine and a total region-wide population of just under eighteen hundred (1800) people -- a mark that is fifty (50) percent of the region’s high point in 1920. This area, situated at the remote extremities of three (3) counties, has seen ever-changing international border rules, is divided by two legislative districts, and is placed in three state tourism areas. We believe with hard work and perseverance these divisions can be turned into strengths. Blessed with a hearty group of locals and a devoted influx of people, twice our number, there is a shared love of our lakes, rivers and forests and the quiet lifestyle of rural living.

As citizens of once flourishing settlements of loggers, farmers and entrepreneurs, we are reclaiming our rural heritage and true sense of community. As new-found pioneers we are striving to build local and far-reaching partnerships in education and economic vitality.

“A Heritage Reclaimed” - Continued

The following bulleted items are some of the community, institutional, and area initiatives under way within the Greater East Grand Region.

- Instituting highly acclaimed place and project based local education centering on the out-of-doors, natural resources and the use of technology.
- Ongoing village and community restoration, including removal of physical blight.
- Advancing the use of technology, including expansion of high speed internet service.
- Deriving local benefits from commercial investments in wind power electrical generation.
- Building partnerships to help sustain the region's only remaining school and key qualities of life such as locally grown food, energy, banking and health related services.
- Utilizing conservation and civic-minded land owners as economic engines for planned development, expanding and improving outdoor recreational infrastructure and ensuring continued access over private lands to public waters.
- Bridging the cultural gap between lake neighborhoods and local communities with conversions from seasonal to year-round occupancy, increased volunteerism and community service.
- Developing ways to capitalize on local agriculture and cottage industries by cultivating working relationships with civic-minded family-owned farmers and timberland owners.
- Coming together as citizens and organizations to achieve a valued sense of place in each community, sharing in the region's rich outdoor heritage, land ethic and abundant natural resources.

It is not by chance or without cause that we now embark on an economic plan for this remote region of Eastern Maine. Decades of decline from systemic changes in the forest products and farming industries have rendered havoc on some of our communities. Other communities, with substantial lake neighborhoods, have been able to slow the impact of rural decline. Citizen groups, key community leaders, civic-minded landowners, creative business people and outside sources of expertise and funding have helped foster key investments of time and energy in the well-being of some of our communities. These investments have produced returns, not the least of which is an awareness of “we can do this – we can overcome.”

A sense of urgency accompanies our efforts to capitalize on these recent developments referenced above. Weaknesses and threats to the economic vitality of the region are real. Concerns over state and federal policies that can undercut critically important infrastructure dictates a credible voice of advocacy and a public platform from which to act. We believe by engaging area citizens in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, capturing momentum, utilizing local assets and cultivating outside relationships will create an economic roadmap benefiting all communities within the region.

“A Heritage Reclaimed”, is about local citizens bringing renewed purpose to a rural way of life and to the communities upon which those lives depend.

Greater East Grand Region Planning Group – August 12, 2019

Greater East Grand Region Economic Planning Area

