

“The Million Dollar View”

The Lakes & Highlands of the Upper St. Croix River

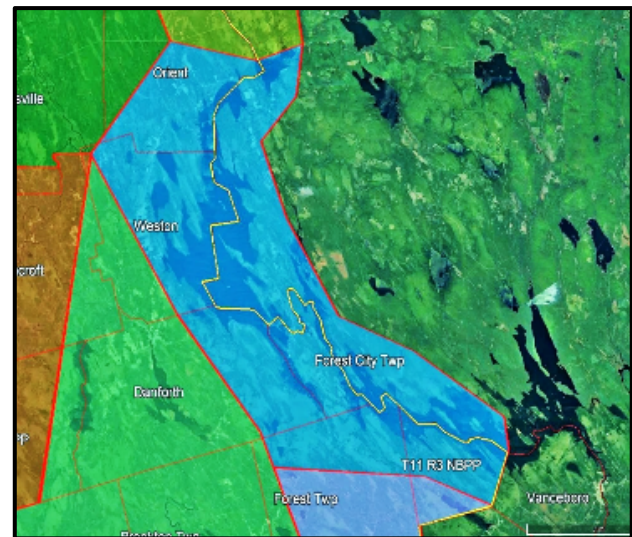


For the GEGR, this area establishes a name set apart from all others in the landscape of the State of Maine.

From scenic vistas to the highest land values in the Region, the **US Route 1 Million Dollar View Scenic Byway** overlooks the highlands, thousands of acres of water and hundreds of miles of shore front in the Upper St. Croix River watershed. Views extend westerly half way across the State of Maine to **Mount Katahdin** and the **Appalachian Mt. Range**, and easterly into the **Province of New Brunswick**.

For the more hands-on, a 56 mile long International circular route by vehicle or bike begins at Route 1 in **Weston** and continues clockwise thru the rural and lakeside settled areas and **Border Crossing of Orient**, passing thru the villages of **Fosterville**, **Green Mountain**, **Pemberton Ridge** and **Forest City NB**, to a re-crossing of the Border at the highly picturesque hamlet of **Forest City**, Maine; leaving 12 miles of additional travel thru an unbroken forest back to US Route 1 and the **Village of Brookton**. Twelve additional miles north along US Route 1 brings the traveler to **Danforth** and 3 more miles to the point of beginning. The 360-degree view from atop the refurbished former fire tower on **Peekaboo Mt. in Weston** reaches to nearly every corner of this 500,000 acre GEGR landscape.

The diverse distribution of developed, undeveloped and conserved shore lands on the 17,000-acre International **East Grand Lake** belies the 800 +/- cottages situated in clusters along its shores. In stark contrast to East Grand, **Spednic Lake**, a remote international sister of similar size to the south, remains much the same as nature provided, the results of a 30+ year history of conservation of its adjacent wildlands in both Maine and New Brunswick. Natural features abound in the Spednic Basin but none can top the water accessible **Historic Booming Grounds**, now a 500 acre, publicly owned old growth reserve which includes **Mud Lake Falls**. Here, also are **two traditional Native American portages** connecting the St. Croix River waters of East Grand, Mud Lake and Spednic Lakes. This backdrop of lands and waters coupled with a fishery that has supported a robust sporting camp presence has been the major draw for years for visitors seeking respite from a busy life by coming to this Region.



Region-wide efforts are underway to diversify, improve and expand outdoor recreational offerings while ensuring the future of the sporting camp and wilderness-like outdoor traditions. Such efforts include expansion of existing hiking trails and the development of water trails including those tailored toward nature-based interests and guided functions. Improving year-

round motorized recreational trails to meet environmental and safety standards and to better connect communities throughout the region is a key priority. Outdoor recreation assets close to home are not only important to attract and keep youth, but for the health and quality of life for residents of all ages. Improvements in access to public water will not only provide more fishing, canoeing and kayaking opportunities, but also will fill a huge gap in vehicle accessible access to waterfront areas for swimming, picnicking and simply relaxing along the water's edge.

Additional focus is also being placed on the expansion and development of recreational related infrastructure for lodging, camping, guiding and availability of outdoor gear. While the development of the areas recreational assets is critically important to the Region, it is no less important to ensure their proper oversight and maintenance and to not compromise the stewardship and protection of the area's natural, cultural assets and resources.

The 1250+/- cottages and nearly three dozen seasonal and year-round neighborhoods around area lakes and waterways represent a highly valued part of the local real estate tax and service business customer base. A small portion of these cottages also provide short-term rentals for family vacationers. Seeking ways to expand services to this largest segment of the Region's population is one of the important components of a region-wide focus on entrepreneurship. This lake population is key in helping to sustain the presence of year-round service businesses such as grocery, hardware, lumber and building materials, energy and food as well as the more seasonal businesses such as wholesale assembly and distribution of greenery, plants and flowers, grounds keepers, landscaping, land and building construction.

No other section of the GEGR so clearly demonstrates the interconnectivity to the lands and people "across the Lake" in **western NB than the MDV-Lakes and Highlands area**. From families whose heritage began in nearby **Green Mountain** to those whose blood lines run throughout the Maritime Provinces of Canada, this rural Region of Eastern Maine is truly of an international origin.

Today, workers, cottage owners, recreationists, civic, conservation, and faith-based supporters continue to be sourced from the larger international community around the Lakes. Maybe, no other issue has so united the peoples of the Upper St Croix as the environmental and economic issues related to the regulation of the international waters and fisheries of the Region, neither of which recognize man-made boundaries. Maybe the best example of a two-country heritage is the historic small Church situated on the high land near the Town Office in Weston. This historic Church overlooks its place of origin in Green Mountain, NB, an immigrant of sorts, having been brought with horses across the international frozen surface of East Grand Lake many years ago.