

An Introduction To “A Heritage Reclaimed” – Creating A Vision For

“THE GREATER EAST GRAND REGION OF EASTERN MAINE” A People United Thru Heritage, Purpose, Nature & a Mosaic of *Community Area Assets & Themes*

The 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 Region of peoples united through heritage, determined of purpose and heavily endowed with nature. This international landscape, once traveled by the paddle and feet of Native Americans, became a favored destination of Europeans; immigrants seeking a new beginning in a land rich with waterways and thousands acres of unspoiled timber.

It was about the year 1820, early settlers, lumbermen by trade and farmers by necessity, began to carve homesteads from the forests and establish communities along the Mattawamkeag, Baskahegan and St. Croix Rivers. US Route 2A (the Military Road) was constructed thru the western portion of the region as a stage and military supply route between Bangor and Houlton in 1832. US Route 1, the Houlton-Calais Road, situated on the high land along the St. Croix and within the eastern edge of the Baskahegan valley was surveyed by 1826, with actual construction languishing for several years thereafter. It was not until 1871, following the pioneering 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. The Town of Danforth, strategically situated on the Baskahegan River, serviced by the railroad and US Route 1 become a major service center for the area. Today, while the Town has grown smaller, it remains the sole service center for the entire Greater East Grand Region.

This rural landscape and its people, heavily dependent upon natural resources, continues to be nourished by its rivers, forests and lakes. It is home to ten (10) widely distributed, small communities in Maine, and four (4) tiny settlements in the North Lake Parish of New Brunswick. Rural and remote, this international area of over 500,000 acres in Eastern Maine and Western New Brunswick shares a forty (40) mile long watery International Boundary in the headwaters of the St. Croix River. Our demographics (based on average age) point to some of the oldest towns in Maine with a total region-wide population of approximately two thousand (2000) 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 of Maine tourism areas. We believe with hard work and perseverance these man-made divisions can be turned into unifying strengths. Blessed with a hearty group of locals and a devoted influx of people three times our census count, 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 instilling the importance of place; in education, in technology, in rural economies and in the stewardship of our natural resources. We are engaging area citizens in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, building on existing momentum, utilizing a diverse array of community area assets, and capturing the entrepreneurial spirit of area youth to strengthen and inspire all communities within the Greater East Grand International Region of Eastern Maine.

“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.

See Attached Greater East Grand Region Community Areas and Themes

Greater East Grand Economic Planning Region -500,000 Acres

- 1) "The Haynesville Woods" – The Branches of the Upper Mattawamkeag River -100,000 Acres
- 2) "A River - "A Forest" & "Its People" – "The Mattawamkeag River Lowlands" -100,000 Acres
- 3) "The Beginnings" – Monument One Marker of the International Boundary & the Farm Country of Aroostook - 35,000 Acres
- 4) "The Million Dollar View" – The Lakes & Highlands of the Upper St. Croix River - 100,000 Acres
- 5) "The Baskahegan Valley" – The Historic, Cultural, Business, Educational, Medical and Entrepreneurial Center of the Region - 135,000 Acres
- 6) "Tomah Country" - The connection to the Lower St. Croix and the Remainder of Washington County - 30,000 Acres

