

Greater East Grand Economic Council
PO Box 465
Danforth, ME 04424

April 19, 2021

Sunrise Economic Council
National Heritage Area Initiative
Machias, ME

To Whom It May Concern:

The Greater East Grand Economic Council represents a remarkable region in Eastern Maine that supports and looks forward to becoming an active part of the planning for and creating an important national heritage area for the United States.

The Greater East Grand Region is a compendium of diverse landscapes, combined to form a highly unique area of over 500,000 acres in size - a landscape which includes the eastern portions of the watersheds of the Middle and Lower Mattawamkeag River, nearly all of the Baskahegan River drainage and most of the Upper St. Croix River watershed including its internationally controlled waters and adjacent shore lands in western New Brunswick.

The forests and wetlands of the Mattawamkeag, the ridges overlooking the valley of the Baskahegan, and the highlands, lakes and tributaries of the Upper St. Croix comprise a region of peoples united through heritage, determined in purpose, and heavily endowed with nature. Its original Wabanaki inhabitants first traveled by this international area by paddle and foot and continue to live in and utilize the landscape to this day. Around 200 years ago it was discovered by Americans of European descent, immigrants seeking a new beginning in a land rich with waterways and hundreds of square miles of valuable 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 part of the Baskahegan valley had been surveyed by 1826, with actual construction languishing for some time 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 with a forest industry that supplied lumber far and wide for the nation's expansion.

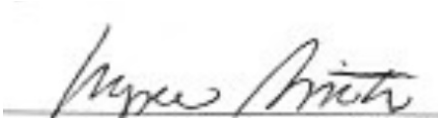
The Town of Danforth, strategically situated on the Baskahegan River, serviced by the railroad and US Route 1 become a major service center for the area. While the Town today has grown much smaller, it remains as strategically important as the only service center within the entire Greater East Grand Region.

The attached photograph of an interpretive sign currently being developed illustrates the contribution of this region to the state's and country's history. 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. We are engaging area citizens in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, building on existing momentum, utilizing community area assets, and most importantly capturing the entrepreneurial spirit of area youth to strengthen and inspire all communities within the Greater East Grand Region.

The Greater East Grand Region and its Economic Council look forward to participating in the work ahead to create a vibrant national heritage area in Downeast Maine.

Sincerely,



Wayne Smith
Board President
Greater East Grand Economic Council

Photograph courtesy of Elbridge Cleaves

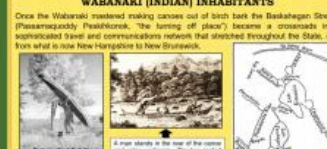
A Depiction of the History of the Baskahegan Valley

Themes from the book *Forest for the Trees* by Roger Milliken Jr.

1600's to Early 1800's

WABANAKI (INDIAN) INHABITANTS


Once the Wabanaki traveled making canoes out of birch bark the Baskahegan River (Passamaquoddy Tradition). The burning off (clear) became a crossroads in a sophisticated travel and communications network that stretched throughout the State, and from what is now New Hampshire to New Brunswick.



When European trappers, American lumbermen and settlers penetrated the interior, Indians guided them along these same canoe routes. The founders of Houlton followed the route of the Madocanog from the Penobscot to the St. John River, and then up the Madocanagog River to the future site of the settlement.


ADVENT OF EUROPEANS

The French, in contrast to the British, were content to settle amongst the Indians. They laid claim to huge areas of land primarily through the influence of Catholic missionaries. All along the borders of British lands land claims were primary objectives by both the missionaries, who spoke the language English, used enough to learn the Indian languages and to live among the tribes.

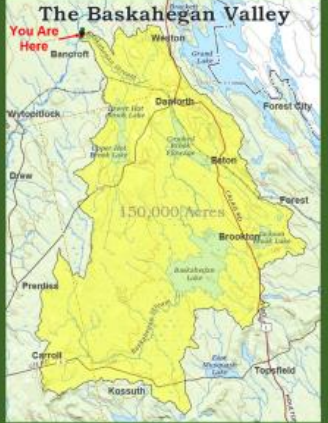


FIRST LUMBERING & SETTLEMENT

The lumbermen who had ventured the novel territory traveled on river channels on the water for a boat of supplies, an ax and an ax on ice. They cut only once and only those trees that could be floated down, into the sea, in a short haul of 100 miles, using rafts, they guided their logs down rivers to sell them to large quantities of diversity at a mill.



The Baskahegan Valley




150,000 Acres


1820's to Early 1900's

THE SAWLOG ERA

Belleville played an, an absolute and local companies began working for themselves as far Bangor and Carleton. No longer did owners handle and take shares hold jobs. It was now in the hands of the lumbermen.




The burgeoning lumbering business ended the last of the early 1850's. Local population and farming declined. In 1840 Daniel Brown took a small plot of land at Bangor. Carl Crawford owned the present site of Carleton village in 1846, and within 2 years he built at Bangor. His plot rose to a new road and down towards Carleton in the subject of Bangor. Local and all others 1 mile added stretch of 6 million feet of timber in 1862 and 13.5 million in 1867. The size of the plot was over. Spruce was king.



HEMLOCK

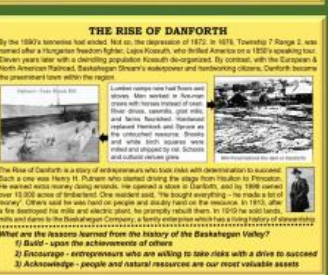
Lumber production of Bangor peaked in 1872. A great depression also began that year. Woods wages dropped from \$25 to as low as \$3 a month. For the Baskahegan Valley, two events followed the blow.



The Jackson Block Lumber was constructed by the New England in 1888. By 1890 the population grew to 300 and Jackson Block became a town with the name of Bangor. By 1890 hemlock was used to replace spruce. Hemlock trees were scarce. The lumber was cut and then floated down the river to Carleton.

THE RISE OF DANFORTH

By the 1890's lumbermen had ended. Not so, the depression of 1872, in 1878, Township 7 Range 2, was named after a Hungarian freedom fighter, Lajos Kossuth, who led America on a 1830 speaking tour. Seven years later with a declining population Kossuth disappeared. In contrast, with the European & North American Railroad, Baskahegan's Shuman's waterpower and manufacturing citizens, Danforth became the government town within the region.



GREATER EAST GRAND REGION

An Assembly of Community Areas
Defined by Landscape - United Through Heritage