

THE PLAN

Prospective Planning Principles

This prospective plan is guided by the following principles:

- 1 **CONSISTENCY WITH CLUP.** Be consistent with the vision, goals, and policies of the Commission's Comprehensive Land Use Plan;
- 2 **PLACE-SPECIFIC.** Create zones that respond to the particular character of the Rangeley Lakes Region. Differentiate between plantations appropriate for growth - primarily plantations adjacent to service centers and organized communities - and those plantations and townships that are remote;
- 3 **LONG TERM VISION.** Promote land uses that reinforce the special character of the region over the long term and discourage or prohibit those that do not. Do not fuel speculative development, drain the economies of existing economic centers, fragment the working forest and ecosystems, or reduce resource protection;
4. **ROOM FOR REASONABLE EXPANSION.** Plan enough room for development in the next 20 years based upon the historical growth rate;

FOCUS ON LOCATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND MAKE PERMITTING EASIER AND EQUITABLE THERE. Make it easier to develop in designated areas. Provide incentives and remove obstacles so that people do "the right thing." Do not force landowners to designate their land for development. Above all, assure equitable results for all landowners, large and small; and
6. **STICK TO THE PLAN.** Make it more difficult to rezone areas outside of designated development zones unless extenuating circumstances, such as unforeseen public needs, emerge.

Otherwise, this plan, and the effort that went into it will not be an effective investment.

Jurisdiction-wide Vision

The Commission's *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* provides direct and unambiguous guidance on vision:

The historical development pattern in which most new development occurs where principle values are least impacted should be reinforced.

The historical development pattern of the Commission's jurisdiction is comprised of *vast areas of relatively undeveloped land, with concentrations of development principally near organized areas and relatively few scattered dwellings elsewhere.*⁴

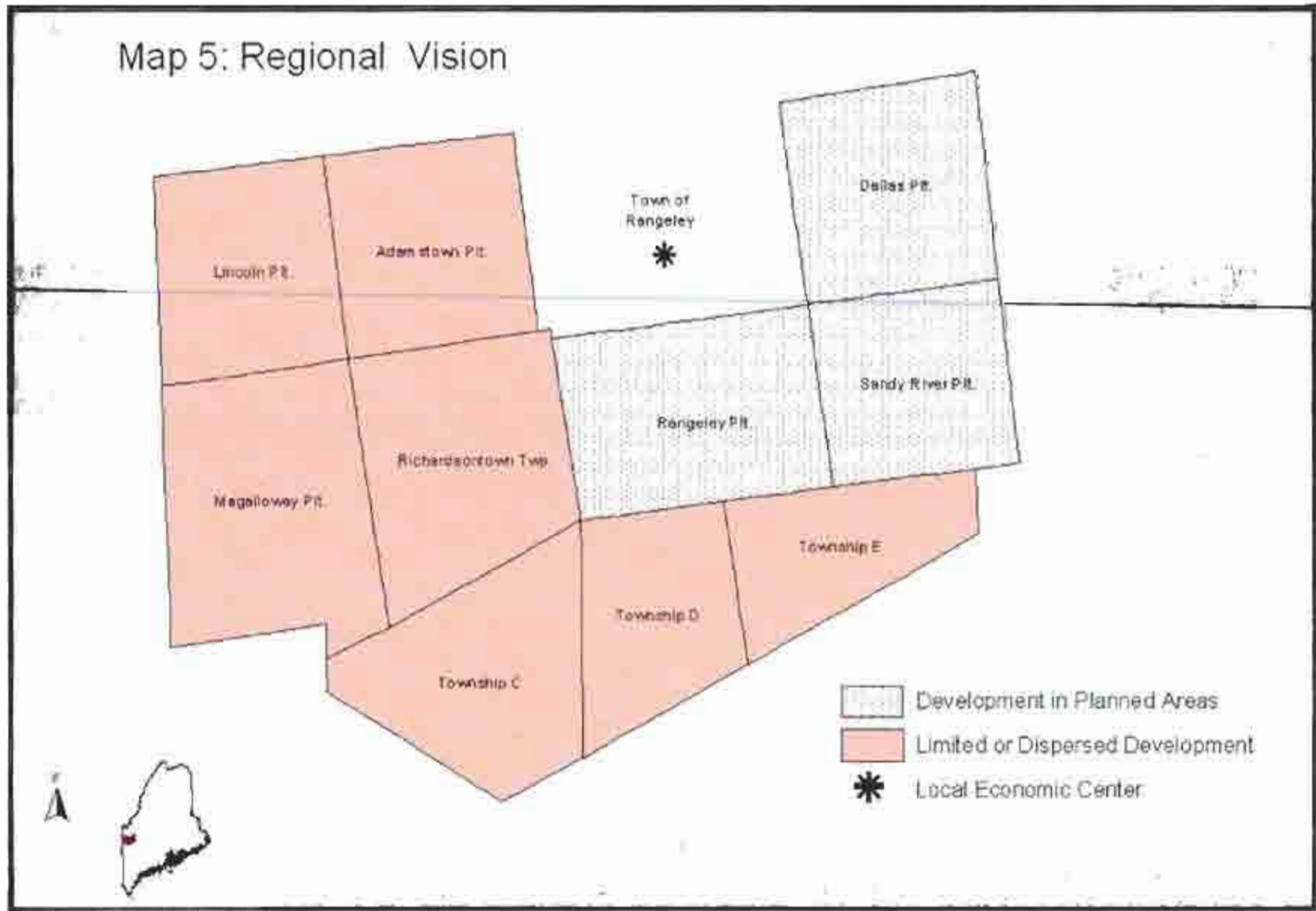
Regional Vision

Four-Season Gateway to Lakes & Woods

Generations from now, residents, corporate landowners, and visitors desire the primary identity of the Rangeley Lakes Region to still be a friendly, four-season community that derives its distinct character and heritage from abundant, undeveloped land managed for multiple, natural resource-based uses.

⁴ Pages 133-134.

Map 5: Regional Vision



Town of Rangeley: local economic center

The villages of Rangeley and Oquossoc will continue to be the primary service centers of the area. They offer a full range of affordable “local” goods such as groceries and hardware for residents and visitors alike, though staples such as bread, milk, and gas may be available within neighboring settlement areas. People will still travel to Farmington, Rumford, and Errol, NH, for more intensive shopping and services.

Adjacent plantations: focus of development

Most year-round, second home, and intensive recreational development will be located in settlement areas in the Plantations of Rangeley, Dallas, and Sandy River (and Town of Rangeley).⁵ Development will be at a pace consistent with historical development and resource values and located so as not to compromise special resource values or create sprawl and strip development. Residents will have flexibility in making a living through a variety of home occupations and businesses that do not compromise this outstanding natural setting.⁶ Land uses will be less intensive in character and scale than in the towns of Rangeley or Farmington.

Outlying townships: working woods

The remainder of the region -- distant from public services and sparsely developed -- will still be characterized by:

- large working forests and landholdings,

⁵ CLUP policy guides year-round residential, second home, and intensive recreational development to locations near organized towns or existing development centers in the Jurisdiction, particularly those that can be efficiently served by existing services, facilities, and utilities. It further encourages concentrated patterns of growth to minimize impacts on natural values and scenic character. Pages 138-140

⁶ CLUP policy encourages economic development in the towns, plantations, and townships identified as most appropriate for future growth. Use buffers, building setbacks, and landscaping, as well as adequate parking and traffic circulation, to minimize the impact of land use activities on one another and scenic quality. Page 141

dispersed uses with light footprints offering a diversity of settings for outdoor recreation⁷ that have a minimal impact on resource values and land fragmentation and conversion,⁸ and small historical settlements with vitality but distinctly remote character and services.

The rate and intensity of development in these outlying areas will be consistent with natural and cultural resource values. Utilities, new public roads, and other accommodations facilitating year-round residency will intrude upon and change the character of remote and semi-remote areas outside of settlements.⁹

High Quality Lakes

Generations from now, the Rangeley Lakes Region will still have high quality lakes offering an array of experiential settings. See Map 5 and Figure 8.

⁷ CLUP policy promotes a range of recreational opportunities, including less-intensive, non-exclusive facilities in areas outside of designated development centers and opportunities for primitive recreation without intrusion from more intensive forms of recreation. Consider traditional sporting camps as recreational and cultural resources, worthy of protection from incompatible development. Page 138

⁸ CLUP policy limits development to low-impact structures in areas where the principal values of the jurisdiction are threatened; encourages site designs that have a minimal impact on principal values of the jurisdiction, including clustering and open space preservation; and discourages unnecessarily large lot sizes. Page 141-142

⁹ CLUP policy calls for locating infrastructure so as not to inappropriately encroach upon or change the character of remote areas or produce an intensity that is inappropriate for a particular area. Page 142

Map 6: Experiential Character of Big Lakes

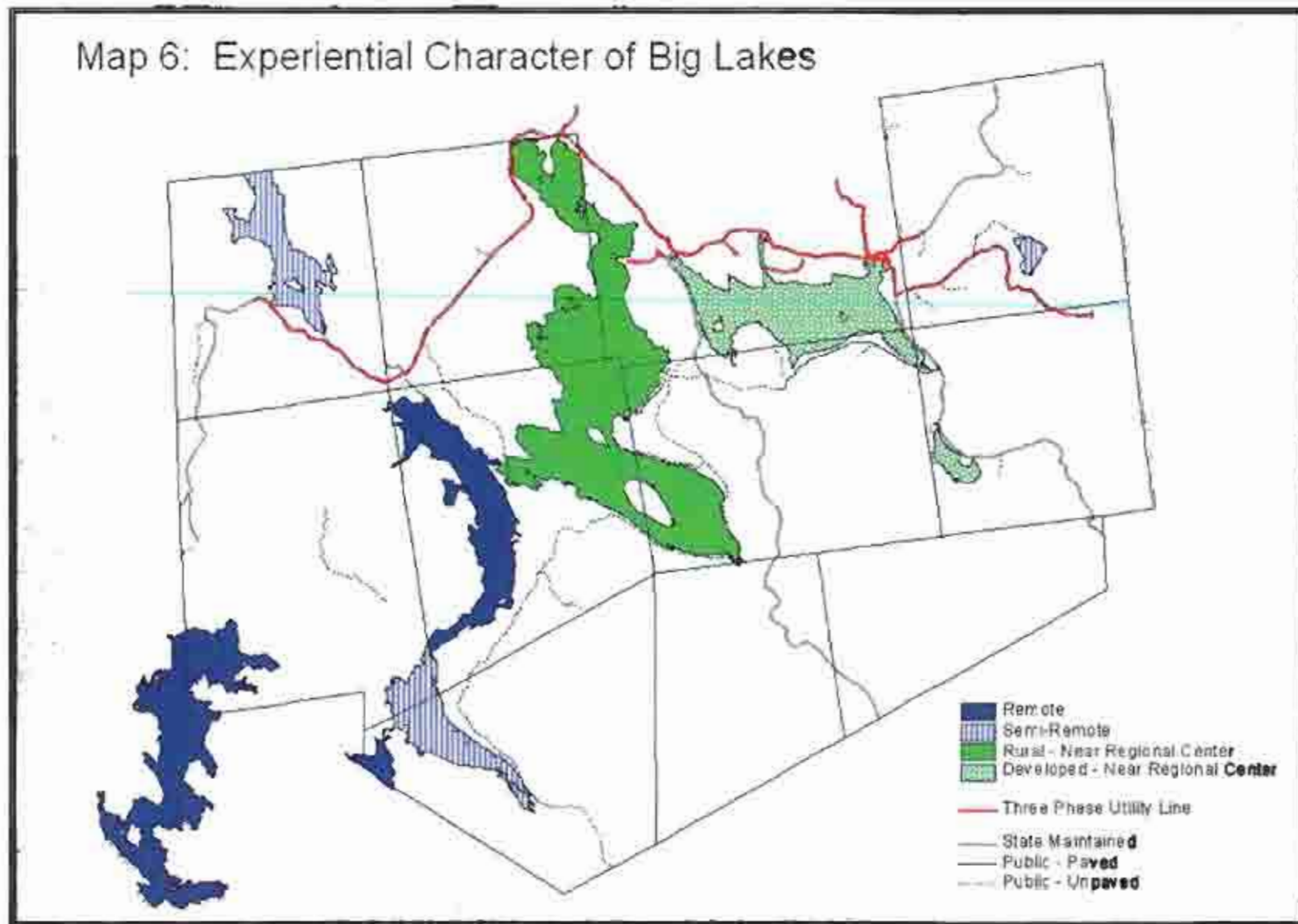


Figure 8: Future Experiential Character of Rangeley Lakes

	Upper Richardson Lake, Umbagog Lake, Pond in the River	Lower Richardson Lake, Aziscohos L. (Lincoln Pt. only), Saddleback Lake	Mooselookmeguntic Lake Cupsuptic Lake	Rangeley Lake Beaver Mtn Lake
Proposed Management Character	Remote Experience	Semi-Remote*	Rural – Near Regional Center	Developed – Near Regional Center
	Lake setting is characterized by essentially undeveloped shoreland used for low impact recreation. Few to no signs of seasonal development exist and backland is managed for forestry or other natural values. Access is primarily by boat.	Lake setting is characterized by no more than half the shoreland modified by dispersed pockets of low impact recreation uses and/or seasonal development. Evidences of the sights and sounds of shoreland development are moderate. Backland is a working forest. Road network is minimal or designed to limit sprawl.	Lake setting characterized by no more than half the shoreland substantially modified by a combination of seasonal and year-round development. Evidences of the sights and sounds of shoreland development are moderate. Backland development has substantial shoreland access.	Heavily developed lake setting with a combination of seasonal and year-round development in shoreland and some backland. Evidences of the sights and sounds of shoreland development are high. Backland development has substantial shoreland access.
Maximum development density/lake mile (based upon entire ownership & as site conditions allow)	1 camp per mile (for these lakes conservation is under negotiation or already secured)	13 camps/mile	13 camps/mile	13 camps/mile
Shore amount to remain undeveloped/conserved	Ideally: 95%	At least 50% in large blocks & retaining sensitive resources	50% (Substantial shorefront of these lakes is already conserved)	Less than 50% already
Subdivision and adjacency requirements	Not applicable because of conservation initiatives	Subdivision allowed w/out rezoning but for seasonal, low impact uses; adjacency not required	Rezoning required outside of prospective development zones	Rezoning required outside of prospective development zones Cluster development required.
Rate of growth	Not applicable	One group of 20 units in 10 years	Controlled by size of zones designated for growth & exempt lot creation.	Controlled by size of zones designated for growth & exempt lot creation.
Required buffers between sporting camps, campgrounds, groups of rental cabins or camps	Not applicable	0.25 mile circular radius	Not applicable	Not applicable

*Additional provisions applicable to Semi-Remote Lake Zone (GP-2):

1. One unit per lot of record allowed as of August 1, 2000, same as existing P-AL district; new lots created under conditions stipulated herein.

2. New zone has 500 feet of depth from shore to foster creative development layouts.

3. Private boat launches for subdivisions only allowed when planned for common use and consistent with other LURC requirements

New Development Zones

After consulting with the public, local officials, and landowners about problems with existing zoning -- and in keeping with the regional vision, six new zones will be applied specifically in the Rangeley area. All are variations of existing zones, but the zoning descriptions are more explicit about where the zones can be applied, the kinds of land uses allowed, and performance standards required to make adjacent uses good neighbors.

These zones are designed as a whole system to reinforce development patterns in a manner consistent with the Regional Vision. It is important to note, however, that they are only one side of the equation because no changes are proposed for the Management Zone, with the exception of changes to the home occupation definition and standards. Consequently, development can conceivably, albeit slowly, spread into the Management Zone, to the extent those landowners sell off the working forest and shorelands of some of the smaller ponds. At this time, all of the industrial landowners plan to continue managing forestlands for timber over the long term.

The new zones include the following:

Five Development Subdistricts

- ◆ D-GN2 Community Center
- ◆ D-GN3 Rural Settlement
- ◆ D-ES Extended Settlement
- ◆ D-RS2 Community Residential
- ◆ D-RS3 Recreational Residential

One Protection Subdistrict

- ◆ P-GP2 Semi-Remote Lake

Other Potential Development Areas

This Plan and proposed zoning maps are the result of talking at length with all of the owners of large tracts of land and at public meetings with owners of smaller parcels. One of these owners, Union Water Power Company, plans to submit a rezoning petition request for projects at Middle and Upper Dams on the Richardson Lakes before this prospective plan takes effect. The company's general plan and maximum densities for both areas were negotiated with multiple parties during the relicensing process for these dams under the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Because this occurred before the development of the new Semi-Remote Lake Protection subdistrict, which stipulates lighter densities, the landowner wishes to be considered under the old Commission rules.

Development of three additional areas - two in Dallas Plantation and one in Rangeley Plantation - was discussed but zoning designations were not applied at this time, pending further information by the landowners (see Map 6). This plan recognizes that these landowners may file requests for rezoning permits for selected locations within these areas during the twenty-year time frame. The Commission will approve such development proposals providing that they are consistent with the pattern of growth, kinds of uses, and amount of overall development specified in this plan and meet all zoning and regulatory requirements and statutory approval criteria.

All three areas are in the watersheds of ponds and lakes that are sensitive to eutrophication. For this reason, special attention must be paid to limiting phosphorus runoff by controlling development densities and minimizing the amount and location of impervious surfaces.

DALLAS PLANTATION

Dallas Company: Route 16

This area is adjacent to an Extended Settlement Zone on Route 16. The community has talked with the Dallas Company about zoning this area for light industrial use. This is one of the future uses that the company will

consider, along with low/moderate-priced housing. In either case, the company plans to site such development so that it minimizes the number of access points onto Route 16 and is set back far enough from the roadway to be screened from view by wooded vegetation. The company is also open to accommodating a connector road from Route 16 to Dallas Hill Road, to the extent that its development proposals facilitate such a connection and are economically feasible. Such a route existed in former times and made local circulation much easier without having to go through Rangeley Village in traveling from one part of Dallas to the other.

Franklin Timber Company: Dallas Hill Road

The Franklin Timber Company owns the planned development zone associated with Saddleback Ski Area and largely located in Sandy River Plantation. The company also has extensive, contiguous holdings in Dallas Plantation along the upper Dallas Hill Road and Saddleback Lake. The company may scale back its currently permitted, but unbuilt development at the mountain and locate it instead in the Dallas Road/Saddleback Lake area. Uses might include housing or commercial lodging establishments. A primary part of the company's vision is to locate such development in pockets near the road or back from the lake. The intention is to conserve the shoreland of the lake for common use and traditional public access.

RANGELEY PLANTATION

S.C. Noyes and Company: southeast corner of plantation on Cross Town Rd

The landowner and local assessors hope to use this property for gravel extraction and asphalt production to meet local needs. Rezoning from a General Management to Commercial-Industrial subdistrict will not be necessary unless permanent mineral processing equipment is planned. The General Management Subdistrict now allows gravel extraction meeting standards under five acres without a permit; and larger acreage with a permit, including portable equipment such as for asphalt batching.

An evaluation of potential project impacts and future reuse will be necessary before an assessment of the appropriateness of this location for Commercial-Industrial zoning can be made.

Amount of Development Planned for 20 years

The challenge of planning is to shape the course of development toward a desired outcome rather than merely to respond to demand and development pressures. This plan seeks to identify appropriate areas to concentrate development in a pattern that will conserve the highly prized natural features and traditional character of the Rangeley Lakes Region. See Map 7 on page 22.

The size of these areas was determined through discussions with local people and in keeping with a general *rule of thumb*. This rule of thumb is to provide enough room for the next twenty years to accommodate about as much development as occurred in the past two decades. This rule of thumb is consistent with State Planning Office policy for communities that are developing growth management plans.

In the last two decades, an estimated 650 residential dwellings or camps were constructed in the ten-township area. Assuming 2 acres per dwelling/camp, the planning area will need about 1300 acres of land zoned for residential and mixed uses.

No attempt has been made to apportion this potential development acreage among the townships. Rather, the strategy is to meet the desires of each community, keeping the overall acreage within the target goal and limiting intensive year-round development to Dallas, Rangeley, and Sandy River Plantations. Most of the land placed in development zones will accommodate residential development as well as home occupations (see descriptions of proposed development zones). Only a small acreage is proposed for mixed use in community centers or intensive commercial-industrial use.

Existing year-round development in D-RS zones in outlying plantations and townships have been replaced by either a D-GN3 zone – in rural settlement areas where limited growth is allowed – or D-RS3 zone on lakes and ponds where adjacent growth is not encouraged.

Plan Implementation

Monitoring Land Use Change

The Land Use Regulation Commission will monitor development trends, including the location, type, and volume of permits and rezoning petitions, on a regular basis to ensure that future development is consistent with the intent and substance of this plan. Interested parties will be kept informed of application activity through the Commission's "Notice of Applications Received and Accepted For Processing," generated on a weekly basis. The list of interested parties will include those who have asked to be on the list through this prospective planning process, including the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and Mooselookmeguntic Improvement Association.

The Commission will monitor two additional issues in response to public comments made during its deliberation on the adoption of this plan. The first involves the issuance of permits for home occupations in the General Management Subdistrict, particularly for special exceptions in Rangeley, Dallas, and Sandy River Plantations. This issue centers on whether home occupations in the M-GN will be complementary or detrimental to the long-term function of the management zone for forestry and agricultural uses and the avoidance of development sprawl.

The second issue relates to monitoring any new development on Lower Richardson Lake to determine its impact on the character of Upper Richardson Lake. This latter issue addresses the question of whether there is a need to treat both lakes as one "remote" lake because they are physically connected and both have outstanding resource values. Boating traffic generated by development on the lower lake will effect the upper portion in equal measure.

Plan Update

Staff will also identify changing circumstances that could not be foreseen in the development of this plan and report annually to the Commission on development trends and how well the plan is working. The Commission

will consider every five years whether an update is needed, but otherwise will make necessary changes during periodic updates of its jurisdiction-wide Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

While the plan provides a general guide for the next twenty years, it is not cast in stone. Zoning changes beyond those described above under "Future Development Areas" will be considered if the proposed developments meet general and prospective zoning review criteria.

Acquisition Priorities

In developing the plan, the Commission has identified some areas where priority attention should be directed for acquisition of development rights, conservation easements, or public ownership. Three of these were mentioned in the Basis Statement and Summary of Comments from the July 17, 2000 Public Hearing. These include Lower Richardson Lake, Azischohos Lake, and the remaining undeveloped shore of Beaver Mountain Lake.

Following through on its Lake Classification initiative of 10 years ago, the Commission has created the P-GP2 zone to allow limited development on Lower Richardson and Azischohos Lakes. These two lakes were considered as having potential for development during the lakes study. Through the comment process on this plan, several individuals and groups have indicated an interest in seeking conservation status for them. In addition, meeting participants in Sandy River expressed similar interest in the remaining developed land on Beaver Mountain Lake. Accordingly, the Commission will work with landowners, the Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust, Land For Maine's Future Board, and others to determine whether opportunities exist for public or private conservation of these areas.

Additional Regulatory Changes

During implementation of the plan, the Commission will explore three other regulatory changes that emerged through the public hearing process. The first involves the elimination of subdivision law exemptions. Land divisions under these exemptions are responsible for incremental

Maine Land Use Regulation Commission
Prospective Zoning Plan for the Rangeley Lakes Region

development and unplanned sprawl into outlying townships and backcountry areas. Because this issue would require a statutory change, the Commission may seek legislation in 2001 as part of the Administration's *Smart Growth* initiative.

Two other changes to the Commission's Rules will be pursued through working with interested parties to improve the Planned Development Subdistrict Rezoning process and enabling the development of "mother-in-law apartments" in the Residential Recreation Subdistrict (D-RS3).



The region's heritage is tied to its lakes and woods.

Map 7: General Location of New Development Areas

