



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION
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Memorandum

To: LUPC Commissioners
CC: Stacie R. Beyer, Acting Executive Director
From: Ben Godsoe, Acting Planning Manager and Stacy Benjamin, Acting Chief Planner
Date: 4/13/2022
Re: Update on Moosehead Regional Planning – Feedback on Discussion Scenarios

INTRODUCTION

When the Moosehead Lake Region Concept Plan was terminated in July of 2020, the plan area, including the former development areas of the Plan, were rezoned as general management zoning and protection zoning. As part of the Concept Plan's termination, Weyerhaeuser agreed not to submit any zoning petitions or development permit applications through December 31, 2022, allowing time for a regional planning process to take place.

As directed by the Commission to initiate the planning process, LUPC staff gathered input from community members and stakeholders in the Moosehead Region through phone calls, virtual meetings, written comments, and an online survey. Staff drew on the expertise of resource agencies to get insight into known natural resources in the region. Staff also reviewed documents from previous community visioning and economic planning processes¹. Following this initial outreach, staff then synthesized a range of opinions and visions for the region into four different Discussion Scenarios. The four [Discussion Scenarios](#) outline various options for designating new development or protection zones, and considerations for applying LUPC location of development criteria (primary and secondary areas). Their purpose was to foster discussion and present a range of options based on community opinions.

¹ These include the Moosehead Lake Regional Branding Initiative, the Moosehead Lake Regional Plan (Futures IQ), and the Draft Moosehead Lake Scenic Byway Corridor Partnership Plan

After review by the Commission, the Scenarios were posted on the project website and shared at in-person public meetings held in Greenville on September 2, 2021 and via two virtual public meetings held October 6, 2021. Altogether, over 50 local residents, representatives from regional organizations, and other interested stakeholders participated in these meetings. In addition, written comments were received from stakeholders representing a variety of regional interests and perspectives.

WHAT WE HEARD

There are some over-arching characteristics about the region, and its development patterns, with which all or most commenters agree. For some of the proposals in the [Discussion Scenarios](#), there is broad stakeholder consensus. For others, there were more diverse opinions and additional consideration is required. The highlights of what we heard are noted below, followed by anticipated next steps in the process. A more detailed summary of responses received to date on each Scenario, including a summary of additional recommendations offered by stakeholders in response to the Scenarios, is also provided.

Over-arching

As with our initial outreach efforts, we found there is universal consensus among stakeholders that the Moosehead Lake region is a beautiful, valuable, and important place, worthy of special care and consideration. Many participants identified specific places in the region they believe are especially valuable and worthy of additional protective measures. There is also strong consensus that any new development should be concentrated near existing development centers and that certain areas are not appropriate for additional development.

Broad Consensus

The following proposed actions from the Discussion Scenarios have broad stakeholder support:

- **Remove primary and secondary locations** from the following minor civil divisions (MCDs): Lily Bay, Sapling, Misery Gore, and Misery Townships
- **Location B**, near Rockwood – Rezone for residential development
- **Location E**, near Harford's Pt. (Big Moose Twp.) – Rezone for general development
- **Location F**, adjacent to Beaver Cove Town Offices – Rezone for general development
- **Location H**, Blue Ridge – Protection of this important visual resource

More Consideration Required

The following stakeholder recommendations, as well as Discussion Scenario proposals that received mixed reviews, require more careful consideration by the Commission:

- **Remove primary and secondary locations** from additional MCDs in the region
- **Additional protections for Indian Pond, Long Pond, and Brassua Lake** - Accomplished through protection zoning, location of development mechanisms, or other mechanism

- **Additional protections for the East and West Outlets of Moosehead Lake** - Accomplished through protection zoning or location of development mechanisms (or combination)
- **Locations A, C, D, and G** – Proposed development areas in need of further discussion
- **Other ideas and suggestions** – Such as the use of broadly applied specialized zoning subdistricts or how to approach planning for specific locations like near the ski area

NEXT STEPS

LUPC staff are in the process of further evaluating the responses and researching the implications of implementing the actions proposed, with the goal of developing a draft package of relevant actions that reflects the community input received so far. Stakeholder feedback has been steering staff recommendations for the draft package, but we anticipate there may be several issues that require deliberation by the Commission before a final proposal is developed. Staff will have a draft package for Commission consideration at the May meeting, including an outline of any decisions needed to move forward.

Following review and discussion on the draft package by the Commission at the May meeting, staff will revise the draft package if needed. Once a draft package is finalized, staff recommend holding additional community meetings in the Moosehead Region to garner feedback on the proposals included. Specific recommendations for this outreach effort and a proposed timeline will be included in the draft package for Commissioner consideration at the May meeting.

~ A more detailed summary of responses received to date follows next page ~

MORE DETAILED FEEDBACK ABOUT EACH DISCUSSION SCENARIO

Discussion Scenario 1

Synopsis

This is the “no change” scenario. The replacement zoning put in place when the Concept Plan terminated in July of 2020 would remain unchanged (M-GN and appropriate Protection subdistricts). The current primary and secondary locations would also remain unchanged. In the future, zoning petitions for new development subdistricts could be submitted in the primary and secondary locations in areas not restricted by conservation easement provisions.

Public Response

None of the participants or commenters specifically noted Scenario 1 as a preferred option.

Discussion Scenario 2

Synopsis

This scenario would remove several townships from the primary and secondary locations, including: Lily Bay Twp., Big Moose Twp., Sapling Twp., Misery Gore Twp., Taunton and Raynham Academy Grant, and Misery Twp. No changes to zoning are included in this scenario.

To stay consistent with the Commission’s lakes management policy, the primary locations surrounding Indian Pond and Brassua Lake would remain.

Public Response

Multiple commenters noted they agreed with the proposals to remove the primary and secondary areas encompassed in Scenario 2. No commenters suggested not removing these areas. Lily Bay was mentioned most often as an appropriate location to remove these designations, perhaps because it was also included in Scenario 4. Multiple commenters suggested adding MCDs to the list for such removal, either through a general statement supporting this action, or specific mention of additional MCDs. In addition, multiple commenters suggested removing the primary areas around Indian Pond, Brassua Lake, and Long Pond.²

Discussion Scenario 3

Synopsis

This scenario would add development zoning to certain areas near existing development and close to the centers of Greenville and Rockwood. No changes to the primary and secondary locations are included in this scenario.

The following locations for development zoning are included in this scenario: ([map link](#))

² Multiple commenters addressed the issue of development on these and other water bodies, even if they did not specify removal of primary and secondary areas. Their comments are addressed in the Other Suggested Actions section below.

- **Location A:** A small area in Long Pond Twp., on the shore of Long Pond. This area would be zoned for residential development (D-RS). It is surrounded by current residential uses and zoning.

Public Response: There were differing opinions voiced about this location, but multiple commenters noted that Long Pond is not suitable for growth. One commenter stated a vernal pool has been identified in this area.

- **Location B:** In Taunton and Raynham Academy Grant on both sides of Rt 6/15 between residential development in Rockwood Strip (T1 R1 NBKP) and residential development on Brassua Lake. This area would be zoned for residential development (D-RS). It is close to Rockwood and lies between two areas with significant residential development in Rockwood and along Brassua Lake.

Public Response: There was broad support for this proposed zoning in comments on Scenario 4.

- **Location C:** In Rockwood Strip Twp. north of existing commercial and industrial development and just west of Rt 6/15. This area would be zoned for commercial and industrial development (D-CI). This location is adjacent to existing non-residential uses that are currently zoned for general development (D-GN) and D-CI. Extending the D-CI zoning to the north would provide some additional area for similar types of uses and concentrate the impacts of those uses.

Public Response: No stakeholders expressed support or opposition to this location. There were general comments in support of development near Rockwood.

- **Location D:** In Taunton and Raynham Academy Grant south of existing commercial and industrial development and just west of Rt 6/15. This area would be zoned for residential development (D-RS), leaving a buffer between the residential zoning and the existing D-CI zoning to the north. This location is across the road from existing residential zoning and uses.

Public Response: One commenter expressed specific support for this zoning. In addition, there were general comments in support of development near Rockwood. No comments in opposition were noted, though concern about the size of these development areas was expressed.

- **Location E:** In Big Moose Twp. near Harford's Pt. Twp., Moosehead Junction Twp., and Greenville. This area would be zoned for mixed use development including residential, recreational and commercial uses.

Public Response: There was broad support for this proposed zoning in comments on Scenario 4.

- **Location F:** Two parcels adjacent to the Beaver Cove Town Offices on Lily Bay Rd. These parcels would be zoned for general development (D-GN).

Public Response: There was broad support for this proposed zoning in comments on Scenario 4.

- **Location G:** In the Town of Beaver Cove just west of Lily Bay Rd. The southern part of this area would be zoned for residential development (D-RS). This location is near existing residential zoning, is near the road, and is within the organized Town of Beaver Cove.

Public Response: There were differing opinions voiced about this location. Though multiple commenters supported development near Beaver Cove in general, this area has been identified as important for deer passage and wintering by both IF&W and local residents, who expressed concern about development there.

Discussion Scenario 4

Synopsis

This scenario removes the primary and secondary locations from Lily Bay Twp. and adds the development zones A, B, E, and F listed for Scenario 3. Protection zoning (P-UA) would also be added to Blue Ridge in this scenario (Location H).

Public Response

Multiple commenters expressed support for all or portions of Scenario 4. There was nearly universal support from commenters to remove the primary and secondary locations from Lily Bay Township, and no one expressed opposition to this idea. In terms of zoning proposed areas for development, there was broad support for Locations B, E, and F but mixed feedback on Location A. There was also broad support for Location H, with multiple commenters specifically stating that special zoning should be added to protect Blue Ridge.

Other Suggested Actions

Multiple stakeholders offered ideas, and suggestions that differed from those presented in the Discussion Scenarios³. This feedback is grouped primarily by resource and summarized below.

East and West Outlets – Multiple commenters noted the value of these locations for high value remote recreational uses and recommended additional protections.

Indian Pond – Multiple commenters recommend stronger protection for the Indian Pond shoreline because of its high value for remote recreation and wildlife habitat.

Brassua Lake – Multiple commenters requested additional protections for the Brassua Lake shoreline, specifically, northern Brassua Lake and the Brassua Lake peninsula.

Long Pond – Multiple commenters noted the importance of protecting Long Pond through new protection zones or removal of primary and secondary areas.

³ Statements made by multiple commenters indicated they believed the development areas identified by the Concept Plan, as indicated by purple lines on the Discussion Scenario maps, were still zoned as development areas. Going forward, it will be reiterated and made clear that these areas were included for reference only and are now zoned M-GN and not zoned for development.

Indian Pond, Long Pond, Brassua Lake - One commenter requested that LUPC reclassify Indian Pond, Long Pond, and Brassua Lake from MC-3 to MC-7.

Big Moose Mountain – Multiple commenters expressed support for development areas near the ski area, though multiple commenters also noted the importance of protecting the north and west sides of Big Moose Mountain.

Upper Wilson Pond – Several commenters proposed limited or no new development around Upper Wilson Pond, noting the lack of public road access.

M-NC Zoning – The application of the Natural Character Management Subdistrict⁴ was suggested by several commenters for either broad use across the region or in specific locations.

Broader Policy Comments

Many participants spoke in general terms about protecting the remote character of the region and expressed concern about the amount and character of development occurring in the region. The importance of the region’s wildlife habitat, water quality, recreational assets, scenic vistas, natural resource-based economy were reiterated by many stakeholders. Other commenters brought up specific issues, including:

- Noting that neither the Location of Development policy or M-GN zoning would protect against single family homes on individual lots and a re-thinking of the 2 in 5 subdivision definition/rule is needed.
- Canada Lynx habitat – Several commenters noted the importance of considering Canada Lynx habitat when planning for the region.⁵
- Dark Skies/Light Pollution/Lighting standards – Several commenters noted the importance of considering lighting standards to promote dark skies in the region.
- Other issues - Increasing recreational use, traffic, noise, the lack of affordable housing, and the impact of short-term rentals on the region were other issues noted by commenters.

⁴ The Natural Character Management Subdistrict (M-NC) designation has not been used in the history of the Commission. Per Chapter 10, it was envisioned to “maintain some of the areas that characterize the natural outdoor flavor and spirit of certain large undeveloped areas of the jurisdiction and to permit only forestry and agricultural practices and primitive recreation.” See page 113 of [Chapter 10](#).

⁵ The Somerset Wildlife Sanctuary, as defined [here](#), was also noted as important for planning.