



Why Thinking Sustainability is Critical in the Mahoosuc Region: Finding The Mahoosuc Way

Jessie Perkins
Maine's Governor's Conference on Tourism
May 3, 2021



Our Footprint

Why did we apply?

- ▶ We had heard of the progress made in the Moosehead and Rangeley areas.
- ▶ We knew we had our own challenges with supporting a large, nearly year-round tourism sector and balancing that with locals' needs and expectations.
- ▶ We wanted to bring together businesses, nonprofits, municipalities, and individuals – and jumped at the chance for facilitated help to do so.



Why were we accepted?

- ▶ We have the assets:
 - ▶ Attractions
 - ▶ Lodging
 - ▶ Restaurants
- ▶ Awareness and support of tourism as a fundamental part of our economy
- ▶ And the individuals and institutions to pull it all together.

Getting to Work

- ▶ Refining our focus – we wanted an advanced-level course
- ▶ What's our preferred future?

Bethel Area CDA – Big Ideas Workshop

Regional Collaboration, Convening, Communication and Leadership

IMPORTANT: ... access to capital; avoiding duplication of effort; paying more attention to how ... supported; making information across region more

Strategic partnerships
public/private

Collaboration
between towns

- Four towns consciously develop 5 to 10-year plans
- Comprehensive economic plan officially adopted by each town (regional planning)
- Focus on necessary infrastructure – sewer, waste, broadband, parking, transportation
- Identify local community leadership in each regional plan

Community
Calendar of
Events

Identify what networks
and relationships already
exist.

Develop pool of
volunteers

- Create quarterly "Live Calendar Meeting"
- Short and long-term "There's nothing to do in Roanoke" series of publications
- Broadcast planning meetings to increase buy in.

Increase
mentoring
opportunities

Cultivate a welcoming &
inclusive community

Regional Director
of tourism

Clearinghouse of
information

- Transparency across region
- Educating region on benefits of new tourism initiatives

Leadership development

- Heart and soul findings – keep using this data.
- Reach out to Gilead, Hanover, Albany Township, Andover.

Host facilitated local
conversations

Share info re
financial & small

Need region-wide:

- Comprehensive plan
- Unified regional tourism strategy
- Branding & unified regional messaging

Four Days in the Fall of 2019

Two day-and-a-half modules

40ish participants committed to all sessions



▶ Learning about:

- ▶ what IS sustainable tourism?
- ▶ What are emerging markets?
- ▶ What are some overarching themes?
- ▶ Who's out there working on our behalf, and what are their messages?
- ▶ Getting to know each other in depth – getting past assumptions

MODULE 1

- Explore macro trends
- Develop future scenarios for regional tourism
- Develop preferred future
- Explore sustainable tourism examples

CDA PARTICIPANTS

MODULE 2

- Develop overall destination approach
- Review industry best practice and examples
- Create Strategic Pillars
- Formulate initial action ideas

CDA PARTICIPANTS

COMMUNITY SUMMIT

- Review CDA outcomes and approach
- Community input into big ideas
- Prioritize actions and pillars

GREATER COMMUNITY

POST-CDA

Pillar action teams execute priority strategies

STEERING COMMITTEE
+ PILLAR ACTION TEAMS

The Pillars

PILLAR

REGIONAL
COLLABORATION

COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

WORKFORCE AND
HOUSING

ENVIRONMENTAL
LEADERSHIP

VISITOR
EXPERIENCE

PURPOSE

Build a culture of collaboration and inclusion, creating shared leadership and regional solutions

Develop mutually respectful linkages between residents and tourism industry

Create unique tourism workforce and housing solutions that enhance local liveability

Implement and demonstrate environmentally responsible approaches

Curate unique visitor experiences based on sustainable tourism principles



MAHOOSUC REGION SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLAN

MAINE, USA
April 2020



future*IQ*

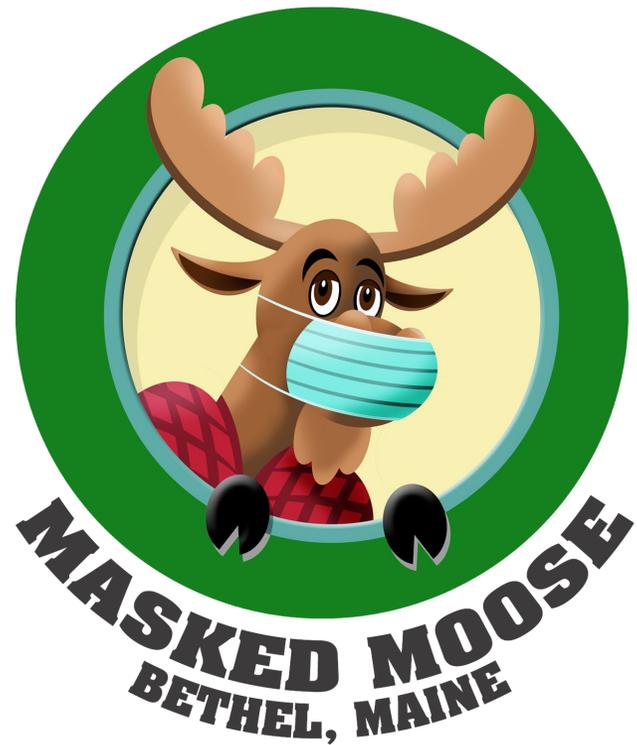
Mahoosuc Region Sustainable Tourism Plan, Maine Woods - April 2020

Mahoosuc Region Sustainable Tourism Plan



Formed the Mahoosuc Sustainable
Tourism Committee on
March 9, 2020

We simultaneously did this



KEEP HEALTHY

KEEP OPEN

The Mahoosuc Way – Pledge to Embrace Our Place



- ▶ The Mahoosuc Way launched in January 2021 with a new website, logo, and pledge.
- ▶ It's the “way” from place to place...
- ▶ But it's also the “way” we do things around here
- ▶ Successful fundraising campaign with 30+ Founding Sustainability Partners – including segments from each of our target audiences.

▶ www.mahoosucway.com

The Mahoosuc Way – Pledge to Embrace Our Place

PLEDGE TO EMBRACE OUR PLACE



HONOR THIS LAND
I PLEDGE TO: Honor this land, respect working forest traditions and local knowledge, and leave this place better than I found it.

EXPLORE WISELY
I PLEDGE TO: Consider my impacts, be careful what I do, and make smart choices about when and where I go.

SHOW RESPECT
I PLEDGE TO: Understand I am one of many people who use these resources, and to be kind and respectful to others.

CULTIVATE COMMUNITY
I PLEDGE TO: Embrace the shared experience of the region, and actively contribute to helping the Mahoosuc communities thrive.

BE CLIMATE CONSCIOUS
I PLEDGE TO: Reduce my unnecessary environmental impacts, reduce my carbon footprint, minimize my waste, and recycle and reuse what I can.

SPECIFICALLY, I COMMIT TO THE FOLLOWING NEW ACTION:

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____



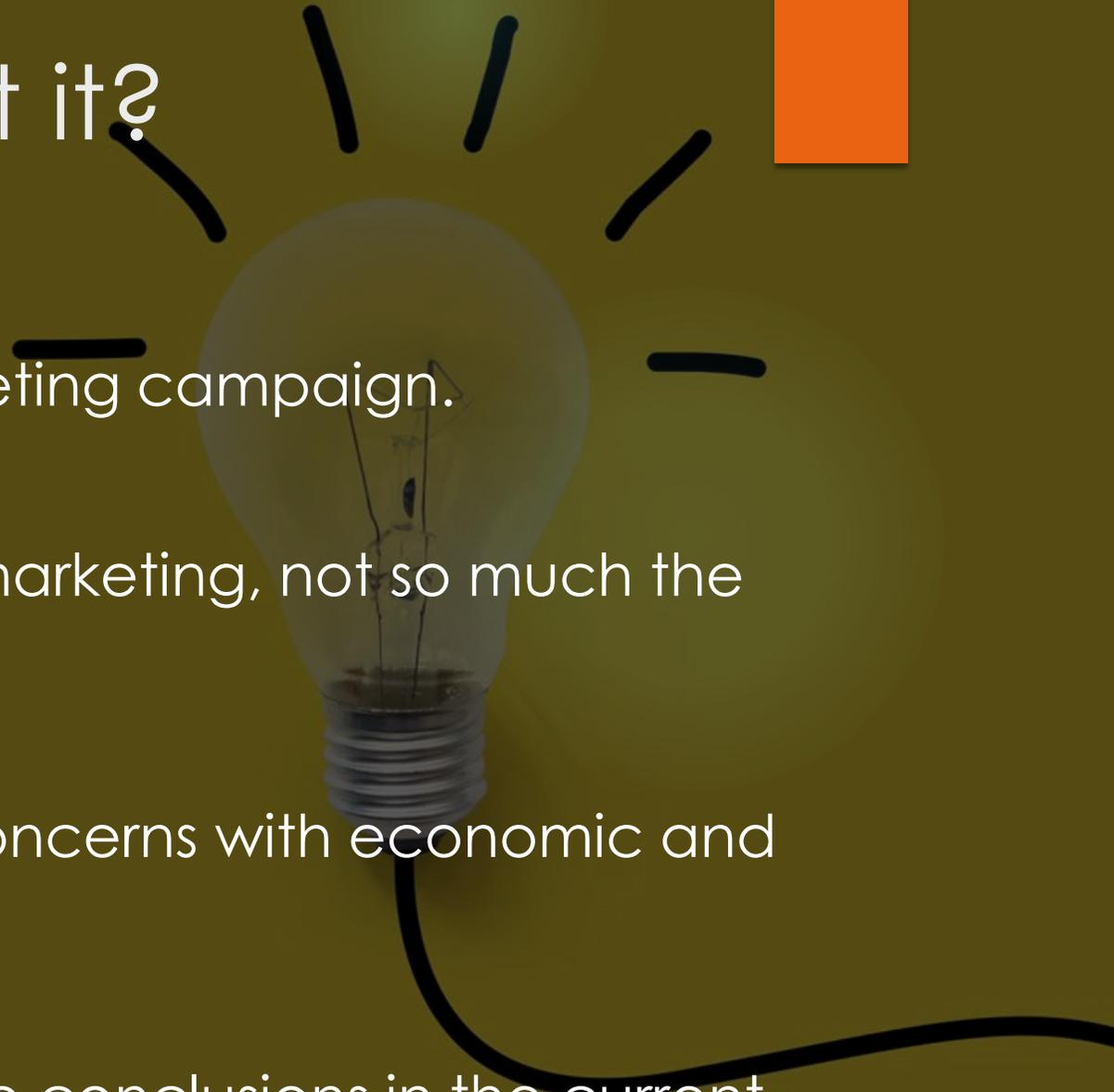
www.MahoosucWay.com | info@mahoosucway.com

Pledge Principles

- ▶ Honor this land
- ▶ Explore wisely
- ▶ Show respect
- ▶ Cultivate community
- ▶ Be climate conscious

What's different about it?

- ▶ This is not a come-one, come-all marketing campaign.
- ▶ The **pledge** is what we're working on marketing, not so much the place itself.
- ▶ It's geared towards balancing local concerns with economic and environmental interests
- ▶ We're not the only ones reaching these conclusions in the current climate. We're just putting our own local spin on it.



What are we doing now?

- Community Outreach – the fundraising we did allowed us to hire an experienced local community outreach consultant
- Personally visiting businesses, organizations, and towns to get them to take the pledge, put it on the website, add to their communications, etc.
- Hired videographers to make us look good
- Gearing up to do more fundraising for a professional marketing campaign



Woodstock Town Manager Vern Maxfield signing the pledge

TMW in action

We made the paper!!



Vern's Sign



What's next?

Getting back to our pillars – notice how all these themes have only accelerated since the pandemic

PILLAR

REGIONAL
COLLABORATION

COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

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Thanks to our Partners

Members of the Mahoosuc Sustainable Tourism Committee

Our team is based on a principle of strong collaboration and a focus on sustainable tourism. The team draws together representatives from across tourism businesses, not-for-profits, local government, and State agencies.

The Mahoosuc Way efforts are being led by a local team, who have come together as a working committee

- Brad Jerome, *The Bethel Inn*
- Karolyn Castaldo, *Sunday River*
- Vern Maxfield, *Town of Woodstock*
- Amy Bernard, *Town of Newry*
- Loretta Powers, *Town of Bethel*
- Kim Sparks, *Town of Greenwood*
- Mia Purcell, *Community Concepts Finance Corporation*
- *Barbra Barrett, *Maine Mineral and Gem Museum*
- *Amy Halsted, *Creative Director*
- *Jessie Perkins, *Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce*
- *Robin Zinchuk, *Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce*
- *Catherine Ingraham, *CEI Consultants*
- David Beurle, *FutureIQ*
- Donna Moreland, *Maine Office of Tourism*
- Micki Mullen, *Maine Office of Tourism*
- Carolann Ouellette, *Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation*
- *Mike Wilson, *Northern Forest Center*
- *Amy Scott, *Northern Forest Center*Executive Committee Member*

We share a passion for the region, and an interest in long-term sustainability. We developed the Pledge to Embrace Our Place as a way to bring locals and visitors together in a shared approach to create a sustainable tourism destination.

Our work is anchored by the Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce and is supported with initial funding from our Sustainability Partners, Northern Forest Center, and Maine Office of Tourism.

Founding Sustainability Partners



AMY
HALSTED



BRENDA
BLOND



EDWARD
EASTER

EMILY ECKER
& MARCEL
POLAK



Gould



JEFFREY
SLOAN

JIM &
HENRIETTA
LIST

LESLIE
JONES

LISA GORDON
& JOHN
TREADWAY

LUCY ABBOTT



Founding Sustainability Partners

 <p>MAINE WOODS CONSORTIUM</p>	 <p>Museums of the Bethel Historical Society <small>ESTABLISHED IN 1944</small></p>	 <p>Northern Forest Center</p>	<p>ROBIN ZINCHUK</p>	<p>SALLY & JOHN KROEKER</p>	<p>STEPHEN WIGHT</p>
<p>STIFLER FAMILY FOUNDATION</p>	 <p>STONETREE CREATIVE</p>	 <p>Sunday River</p>	<p>The Barn Collection</p>	 <p>The Bethel Inn Resort 1913 MAINE</p>	 <p>The Philbrook Place EST. 1870</p>
 <p>The River Fund MAINE</p>	<p>TOM DAVIS</p>	 <p>BETHEL MAINE</p>	<p>TOWN OF GREENWOOD</p>	<p>TOWN OF WOODSTOCK</p>	 <p>TRUE NORTH Adventureware QUALITY OUTDOOR CLOTHING & GEAR</p>
<p>Maine VisitMaine.com</p>	 <p>West Bethel MOTEL MAINE WeBeMol</p>				