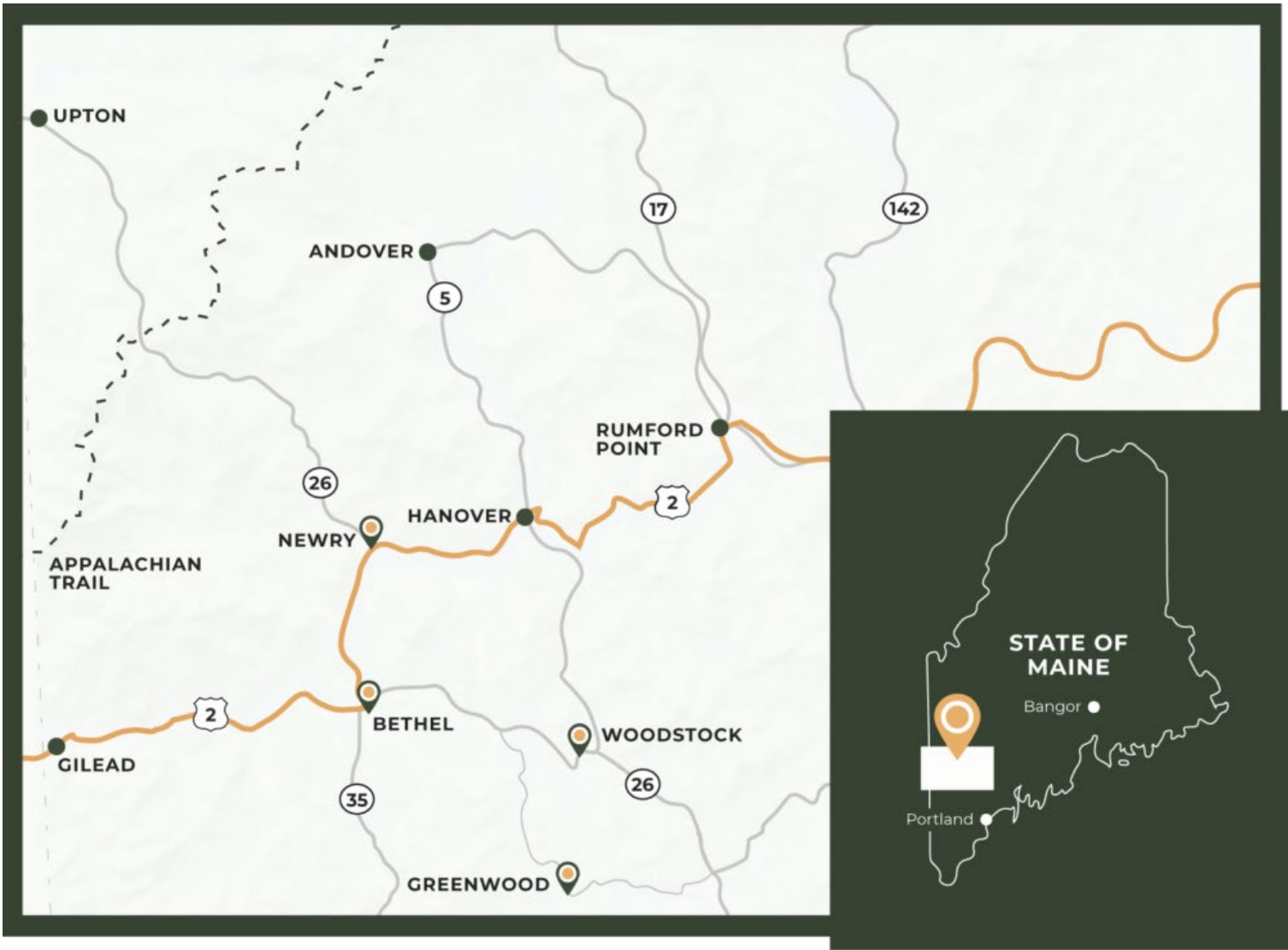




## **Why Thinking Sustainability is Critical in the Mahoosuc Region: Finding The Mahoosuc Way**

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

Need region-wide:

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

Share info re  
financial & small



# 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](http://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](http://www.MahoosucWay.com) | [info@mahoosucway.com](mailto:info@mahoosucway.com)

## Pledge Principles

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



# What's different about it?

A lightbulb with a black outline and a glowing orange square in the top right corner. The lightbulb is the central focus, with several black lines radiating from its top, suggesting it is lit. The background is a dark, textured green.

- ▶ 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

WORKFORCE AND  
HOUSING

ENVIRONMENTAL  
LEADERSHIP

VISITOR  
EXPERIENCE

PURPOSE

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

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*Implement and demonstrate environmentally responsible approaches*

*Curate unique visitor experiences based on sustainable tourism principles*



# 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 <b>Bethel</b> Historical Society <small>ESTABLISHED IN 1944</small></p>	 <p>Northern Forest Center</p>	<p>ROBIN ZINCHUK</p>	<p>SALLY &amp; 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 <b>Bethel Inn</b> 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 &amp; GEAR</p>
<p>Maine VisitMaine.com</p>	 <p>West Bethel MOTEL MAINE WeBeMol</p>				