



The Stonecutter Statue by William Muir- William and Emily Muir, noted artists from Stonington, drew inspiration from the life and landscape of Downeast Maine. William was a Modernist landscape painter and an accomplished sculptor. In 1953 alone his sculptures were included in shows at the Metropolitan, and the Whitney Museum, the Pennsylvania Academy, and the Detroit Institute, as well as Bowdoin, Colby, and Dartmouth. Emily, a painter and architect, was the first woman appointed to the National Commission of Fine Arts, under President Eisenhower. William Muir's Stonecutter statue sits on the waterfront in downtown Stonington and commemorates the granite industry and hard working people of Downeast Maine.



CHAPTER 3

Community Planning & Support

Chapter 3 evaluates Criterion 6 of the required criteria for National Heritage Area designation.

Criterion #6 – Planning & Support

Residents, business interests, non-profit organizations, and governments within the proposed area are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants including the federal government, and have demonstrated support for designation of the area.

Convenings & Discussions

Discussions around the possibility of forming a National Heritage Area designation occurred for several years, beginning with conversations about a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Wild blueberry Farmers spoke with state and regional representatives and other farmers. Small convenings led to larger ones with a growing number and diversity of stakeholders.

On July 25, 2019, Sunrise County Economic Council hosted a small group of community stakeholders, also attended by the NHA Program Manager for the National Park Service’s Northeast Region. At the conclusion of that day’s conversations, the group decided to hold a public summit to bring together a broader set of stakeholders and community leaders

to determine if an NHA proposal would have wide-spread community support. A conversation amongst a wider group of stakeholders would help the group consider all the stories of Downeast Maine and discuss potential benefits and identify any concerns with going forward.

A Summit was convened on October 9, 2019 and attended by 40 community participants from both Washington and Hancock Counties. Participants represented local businesses; heritage, education, and conservation organizations; and state and federal government offices. Attendees voiced a desire to conduct a study around broader natural resource-based topics, including our fisheries and forest industries, outdoor recreation resources, history, and scenic beauty.

A public summit was attended by multiple stakeholders from Washington & Hancock counties



Summit participants were asked to consider – “What would a Downeast NHA look like?” To do that, meeting participants were broken into six small groups to brainstorm ideas and answer three specific questions:

1. **What best defines this place?**
2. **What are the defining human interactions with this place?**
3. **What are the unique natural, cultural, and historic, features of this place, and how are they important to the nation?**

Breakout groups were asked to discuss these questions and distill their conversations into a brief set of notes and to present their thoughts on how the region’s unique natural, cultural, and



Lobster buoys drying - Coastal Downeast Maine is a landscape of working waterfronts and dooryards filled with accoutrements of the trade. Traps, drags, boats, buoys, and bait trucks are seen everywhere. Clam and worm diggers work the mud flats early and late according to the tides. Fishing boats roar off from their moorings before sunrise. Boat shops and marinas transport their oversize loads very slowly down the middle of the roads.

historic resources combine to represent a cohesive and nationally important National Heritage Area candidate. The notes from those presentations are below:

Group 1: This area is a land of firsts (nation formation) with unspoiled resources and culture that has led to innovation and creativity. People have shaped the land through fisheries, agriculture, preservation/conservation, and recreation. There is a high quality of life that is community oriented, internationally connected, and focuses on remaining a quiet and beautiful place.

Group 2: This is a wild landscape where people earn a living from the natural resources. There is unique natural beauty, with clean waters and bold features. People and the landscape influence one another as they support communities and the land – there is a strong bond. This is a 3-nation region with strong partnerships and deep historical significance.

Group 3: This is an unspoiled landscape both culturally and with our natural resources. The land has shaped the people, as the people have shaped the land. The communities and families have both local and international ties with a high quality of life.

Group 4: The wild harvest is a focus (blueberries, fisheries, recreational) where there is a deep connection between the land and water. The remoteness makes it special, while the people are resilient and resourceful. The landscape and people interact equally with deep ties to one another and who have a strong history.

Group 5: The theme is wild (forest, fisheries, blueberries). The area has low population density, therefore there is room for tourists. It is a seasonal economy making many different activities

for jobs. People are self-independent living off the land and protecting natural resources. There are strong partnerships with the Passamaquoddy Tribe. Several unique features including wild resources, artist heritage, history, good quality of air/light pollution.

Group 6: The area is defined by its natural resources where the families have been adapting to the land and water over generations. Strong ties across borders, between different cultures/people, and between the land and sea. This area has a strong history with the Revolutionary War and resources (timber/granite). We have been feeding the nation (wild blueberries, fisheries, etc.) for a long-time. As the industries have changed, the people have changed to meet the times and the landscape.

At the conclusion of the meeting, participants endorsed conducting a Feasibility Study and presenting it to Congress for their consideration. It was agreed that SCEC was the appropriate regional community group to support that effort. SCEC committed to identify sources of funding for the work. Maine Community Foundation partners and an anonymous donor provided enough funds to begin the Feasibility Study, and SCEC provided the remainder.

Gathering Public Input

SCEC began the Feasibility Study in early March 2020. SCEC staff met in person to discuss the project with representatives for Maine's Congressional delegates; the Maine Office of Tourism; Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry; and the State Bureau of Parks and Lands. Soon after, stay-at-home orders were in place due to the Covid 19 Pandemic and planned tactics for public information-gathering sessions were altered.

In lieu of public meetings, SCEC staff conversed one-on-one with community members and organizational partners via Zoom. SCEC staff attended Board and committee meetings around the region to introduce the proposal and gather feedback. Organization boards and committees throughout Downeast Maine include primarily businesses and



A word cloud representing the common themes emerging from this Summit's breakout discussion.

community members rather than paid staff. A Feasibility Study web page was created to provide information, and a community survey was created for public comment.

A series of drop-in Zoom meetings was held each Thursday at noon through June and July. Attendance each week ranged from 3-9 participants. A few attended every meeting. Total participation through these remote discussions was over 60 people.


Zoom meetings, the web page, and the survey were promoted via multiple E-newsletters to over 300 stakeholders each time. Social media posts were created and shared with the Facebook pages of chambers of commerce, historical societies, community bulletin boards, libraries, and other social groups. Press releases were distributed to newspapers across Washington and Hancock Counties.

Letters were sent to leaders from each of the four Wabanaki Tribes in the region in January 2021, explaining the project and inviting feedback and participation. Letters were also sent to County Commissioners and to our regional representatives to the Legislature.

Members of the Working Group consulted with Tribal leaders and utilized both contributed information and information from public resources. However, the information contained in this document tells only a limited aspect of the Wabanaki and Passamaquoddy story. The Working Group hopes to develop stronger partnerships with Passamaquoddy Tribal members during Phase 2, Management Planning.

The Working Group

The Feasibility Study was led by a team of 13 representatives of our collective heritage stories. The core Working Group was established in August to guide SSEC staff to conduct the Feasibility Study and represent



Sunrise County Economic Council

Facilitating the creation of jobs and prosperity in Washington County

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA DESIGNATION for DOWNEAST MAINE...

What does this mean, and why would we do it?

Sunrise County Economic Council is conducting a **Feasibility Study** to determine if the DownEast Acadia region could support designation as a **National Heritage Area**.

NHA THURSDAY

Join **Sunrise County Economic Council** for **NHA Thursday**, a series of weekly community discussions about the long-term feasibility of establishing and then stewarding a National Heritage Area in the DownEast Acadia region.

Just join one discussion, or join us every week.

Meetings held via Zoom every Thursday through July 23, from 12:30-1:30pm.

- June 25
- July 02
- July 09
- July 16
- July 23

If you are unable to join on any of these dates and times, but would like to learn more, please contact Crystal: chitchings@sunrisecounty.org








OR (207) 707-2057.

CLICK HERE to Join Zoom Meeting ONLINE

OR

Join via **TELEPHONE** - dial (646) 558-8656

Meeting ID: 944 0664 1248



the diverse aspects of Downeast Maine’s interwoven heritage story. Wild blueberries, fisheries, forestry, habitat conservation, outdoor recreation, tourism, economic development, businesses, history and culture were all represented.

The Working Group contributed information, ideas, advice, and additional contacts to support the project. They helped solicit input from the general public and municipal, community, and organization members.

In addition to Sunrise County Economic Council staff, the core Working Group team included representatives from these regional organizations:

1. Maine Coast Heritage Trust
2. Downeast Salmon Federation
3. Wild Blueberry Commission
4. Maine Geopark – College of the Atlantic
5. Maine Sea Grant – Downeast Fisheries Trail
6. Bold Coast Scenic Byway & Bikeway
7. DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism
8. Hancock County Planning Commission
9. Heart of Ellsworth
10. St. Croix Chamber of Commerce

The Working Group first convened on September 22, 2020 and held additional meetings approximately every 6 weeks through January 2021, and then again in April. SCEC staff provided an update of the Group’s progress and findings to Maine’s Congressional delegates on January 12, 2021, via Zoom. Two public updates and discussions were held via Zoom on February 3rd and 4th. Total attendance at the two public updates in February was 48, some attendees learning about the initiative for the first time.

Letters of support were provided by a wide range of community members and interest groups. Copies of these letters and other public feedback documentation is included in Chapter 10, Public Endorsements for NHA Designation.

Community Feedback

Following is a summary of public Input gathered during 2020. Public Input was gathered from all across Washington and Hancock counties using various means of communication as described above. Following are summaries of responses to two key questions:

1. What Are Nationally Significant Stories, Themes, Or Places Shared across Downeast Maine?
2. Do You Have Any Concerns About NHA Designation, Or Considerations for Conducting the Feasibility Study?

1. Do You Have Any Concerns About NHA Designation, Or Considerations for Conducting the Feasibility Study?

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	1. Marketing the program- making it widely-known to the traveling public that it is worth coming here for the vast amount of tourism related travel 2. that there is plenty of information readily available to current local businesses/organizations so that they can also help promote the historical sites. 3. strong infrastructure- signage/information present at the historical sites to make it unique and memorable to visitors, so that they, in turn, will want to recommend it to friends and neighbors. This may include having docents present/guided tours, etc. 4. support from tourism businesses in the Acadia area to draw visitors to Downeast Maine which certainly needs the economic boost.	4/13/2020 2:39 PM
2	I would be concerned whether local businesses would want to be a part of this effort	4/6/2020 9:23 PM
3	My fear is that this will be used to help Bar Harbor and the State Park and not the individuals in Washington County	3/24/2020 11:32 AM
4	Is there federal monies to help?	3/23/2020 8:25 AM
5	I'd like to understand the worries or concerns that opponents have, to be able to work with these. As far as I know this is a win-win-win scenario. So what issues still remain to be addressed?	3/20/2020 9:42 AM
6	taxes? local towns suffer with reduced or no taxes from such programs.	3/19/2020 4:55 PM
7	waste of dollars	3/17/2020 3:27 PM
8	It will destroy Downeast with its socialist program. Life will become more expensive and expand the poverty level. It will take away our Constitutional rights. Our Land. Our lives.	3/17/2020 7:56 AM
9	What locations will be designated?	3/16/2020 12:20 PM
10	The amount of effort it takes.	3/16/2020 11:57 AM
11	That we don't get it.	3/16/2020 9:43 AM
12	the legal status doesn't seem to protect land from corporate ownership	3/16/2020 8:10 AM
13	I have an abundance of concerns.	3/16/2020 7:00 AM
14	As a widely experienced internationalist I can see all kinds of benefits. There was an attempt once before to establish a National Park in the Cobscook Bay area - it was rejected by the locals as it was perceived as "controlling". How will you enthruse the fishermen, old families not connected to the modern world, and those who resent tourists and don't want the area turned into another Acadia?	3/14/2020 7:05 PM
15	these are the current national heritage areas: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Heritage_Area what similarities does our area have with these?	3/14/2020 3:37 PM
16	Will this impact private landowners, will it be "embraced" by the populace of Hancock/Washington Counties ? Will it have a direct benefit to people here? Who funds it?	3/14/2020 2:05 PM
17	Too much tourism	3/14/2020 8:54 AM
18	Public acceptance and participation, and ability to think outside the box may be a challenge. Willingness to attract visitors through local beautification and preservation ordinances seems questionable.	3/13/2020 6:01 PM
19	How will the region's constituents be involved in visioning, planning, and implementing the manifestation of this designation?	3/13/2020 4:30 PM

2. What are Nationally Significant Stories, Themes, Or Places Shared across Downeast Maine?

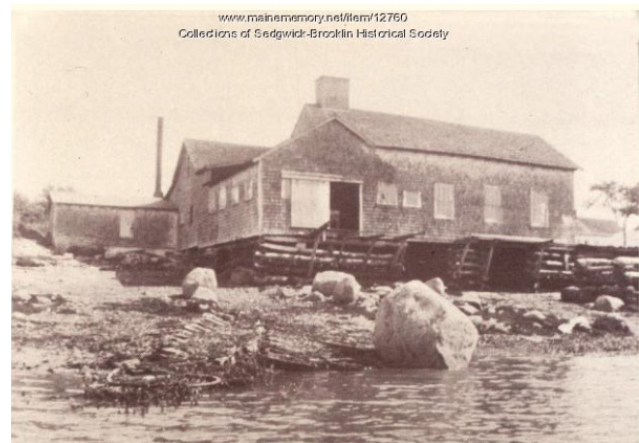
- The region was the NE point of entry to the United States by many peoples and provided the building blocks for settlement and formation of the American nation.
- Continuous use of land by people – many cultures have inhabited it but importance of natural resources carries through all inhabitations
- Glacial, geologic, and geographic – natural influences on future human society and occupations – how people have adapted and survived on this harsh landscape
- Sea level change is now affecting the coast... land rebounded after glacial melt but is now sinking
- Easternmost point of continental US
- Importance of being Unimportant (geography has left us undeveloped, uncommercialized); landscapes still appear as they did thousands of years ago
- Native American history & continued culture; Passamaquoddy has only written language of indigenous people; Wabanaki Tribe was not completely displaced from their homeland.
- Early European Vikings and explorers, Basque fishermen – early transportation routes and settlement – St. Croix Island International Historic Site, Eastern Maine Canoe Trail
- Wabanaki/I'Acadie/Colonial relationships
- Maritime history – shipbuilding, transportation, trade, battle
- Passamaquoddy helped keep Maine from becoming part of another country (this should be acknowledged during the bicentennial!!)
- Fisheries –prolific waters, human-caused change in species make-up; current management and conservation that allows interactions with working environment, strengthens natural resources economies; continue to feed the world (largest lobster exports)
- Agriculture – Fed eastern cities and soldiers with grains, herring, wild blueberries; continue



Dutch Lion Daalder Coin, Castine - This 1641 Dutch lion daalder coin found at the mouth of the Bagaduce River in Castine indicates the existence of a thriving trade in the 1600s. Present-day Castine was a contested area of overlapping Wabanaki, English and French claims for centuries. In 1674, during a period of French control, Dutch privateers attacked the fort and took the Baron of Saint-Castin and others hostage for ransom. Photo courtesy of Maine Historical Society.

to feed the world (largest wild blueberry exports); continue to produce & serve fresh, locally harvested or produced foods; history of sheep on islands, land given to colonels, generals; back to the land movement

- Forest products – lumber built the nation; King's pines; wreaths & balsam products, timber, maple syrup, toilet paper...
- Migrant worker contributions to wild blueberry & seafood businesses, and migrant families that have become permanent residents
- Construction of eastern US cities – granite (unique forms of granite revealed when magma chambers from ancient volcanoes flipped) & lumber (old growth pine forests, rivers & ocean provided easy transportation), advanced modern life (ice for refrigeration was 2nd largest export of the northern region of Downeast).
- Spirit of cooperation with Canada; international border communities
- Determination of American political boundaries – between Massachusetts, Maine, Canada, France; baseline for eastern seaboard counties & states
- Parameters of time & navigation – Meridien Park, Greenwich Mean Time, lighthouses
- Remote, rural island life – fishing communities, seabird research, lighthouses
- Waterfalls (geology) allowed hydro power for mills – other states shipped grain to the region, cotton from south for processing
- Shipping via railroad into Canada allowed troops & goods to be shipped to Sidney, weather stations to be manned
- Rustication & Tourism – the famous people (like in NE Harbor)
- 250 years history of direct descendants of European forebears carrying forward natural resource economy and family heritage; commercial working landscape
- Served as defense system of USA against Europe, created solid veteran culture
- Atusville, underground railroad



Blueberry Cannery, Brooklin - The Steven & Charles Cousins blueberry cannery at Brooklin in the early 1930s. Clams, brown bread and baked beans were also canned at this factory. Photo courtesy of Sedgewick-Brooklin Historical Society.

Survey Results

Although the community survey only elicited 24 responses, valuable and affirming information was gathered. Survey questions were open-ended, intending to solicit unique and diverse responses.

- Describe 3-5 of the most nationally significant stories, themes, or places that unite the region.
- What 3 words or short phrases best exemplify the general personality or characteristic of DownEast Maine?
- What is the one overarching story or connecting thread between the several nationally significant stories you described - in 2-3 words?

Responses were put into word clouds to more easily examine what aspects of cultural and natural heritage people value. A word cloud is a collection, or cluster, of words depicted in different sizes. The bigger and bolder the word appears, the more often it's mentioned within a given text and the more important it is. Following are the results of this exercise.

Q2 – Benefits of the NHA Program - Area, Tourism, Increase, Local

The word cloud for survey question #2 indicates that survey respondents consider increased tourism across the region an important community benefit of NHA designation. During public discussions some people expressed concern that becoming an NHA might bring too much tourism and degrade what we value. Another concern expressed is that program resources could favor tourism promotion over cultural education and local initiatives. Word Cloud Q2 indicates that, from a heritage preservation perspective, survey respondents prioritize **Local, Pride, Story, Culture, and People**.

see community benefit bring business industry local story tourism support
area people increase able visitors cultural resources greater pride



Douglass Copper Mine Blue Hill, 1880 - Copper was found along Mines Road in western Blue Hill in 1876. The quality of the ore and ease of shipping it out from the harbor sparked a major mining boom. Speculation ran rampant, fueled by visiting experts. By 1881, the companies began to fail because of an unstable market and management issues. Photo courtesy of Blue Hill Historical Society.

Word clouds Q4, Q5, and Q6

The following word clouds outline survey respondents' perspectives on the core heritage story of Downeast Maine.

Q4 - What are the most nationally significant uniting stories, themes, or places that unite the DownEast and/or Acadia region? Responses: Downeast, Fishing, Maine, History, Native Americans, (wild) Blueberries.



Q5 - What 3-5 words or short phrases best exemplify the general personality or characteristic of the DownEast and/or Acadia region? Responses: Rugged, Land, Beauty.



Q6 - What is the one overarching story or connecting thread between the several nationally significant stories you described (in 3-5 words)? Responses: People, Land.



Overall Heritage Priorities

Collectively, priority words from the Q4, Q5, and Q6 word clouds above were combined into their own word cloud, revealing this order of heritage priorities:

- Land
- People
- Downeast
- Nature, Maine, Living, Wild
- Blueberries, History