



Stonington Harbor, Foggy Sunset – Deer Isle is the launching point for some of the most beautiful islands along the 375-mile Maine Island Trail. The Trail is a collection of over 240 wild islands and mainland sites open to the public for day use or overnight camping. Trail sites in both public and private ownership are based on a mutual commitment to coastal access and land stewardship. Therefore the sites, usage guidelines, and stewardship strategies are adjusted regularly to meet changing environmental conditions.



CHAPTER 8

Alternatives to NHA Designation

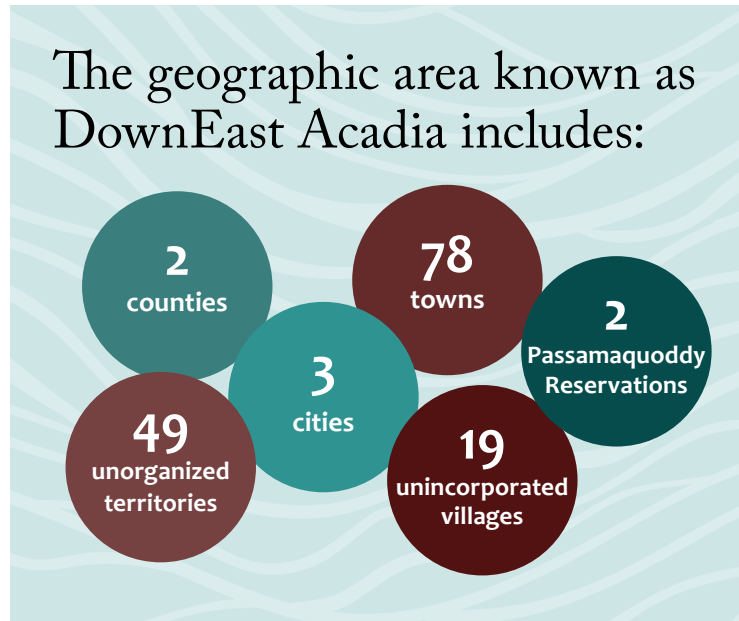
Chapter 5 outlines three possible management methods, and boundary alternatives, and assesses any anticipated or potential impacts of each. Proposed boundaries are described in detail within Chapter 1, Introduction. Management methods outlined in Chapter 5 include:

1. Status Quo continuation of existing initiatives with no change
2. Local or state operation of a heritage area without federal designation
3. Federal designation as a National Heritage Area

Alternative 1 – Maintain Status Quo

Alternative 1 explores management of the region by continuation of the status quo with references to any known changes that may occur, including any state or local initiatives that may affect the region.

In this alternative, the existing DownEast Acadia Region remains unchanged. No additional technical assistance or funding is provided through the National Park Service for coordination, interpretation, preservation, or heritage development purposes. The current level of heritage development activities continues as a patchwork of relatively independent initiatives. Since no federal funding or technical assistance support would be assumed, all resources for heritage development would be sought from the same limited state and local sources used in the past.



The geographic area known as DownEast Acadia includes two counties, 78 towns, 3 cities, 49 Unorganized Territories, 19 Unincorporated Villages, and 2 Passamaquoddy Reservations. A great number of local governments, non-profits, and community organizations manage diverse economic and community development initiatives across this geographically large and rural region, and ultimately compete with each other for both human and financial resources. For many decades our region has experienced challenges that reduce pride in place and limit economic and cultural opportunities. Organizations and local governments have made great strides to overcome these challenges and build a better future. A fierce loyalty to history, tradition, the land, and to community fuels these advancements.

Status Quo reveals that, although public entities across the region generally recognize and embrace collaboration and partnership as the best approach to building local quality of life, manifesting this vision is a long-standing challenge. Our cultural tendency toward self-reliance and our rural geography creates many separate but parallel - and sometimes redundant - efforts. Most entities across the region are stretched to capacity. Our inability to coordinate and create

stronger cohesion across our many similar missions erodes our ability to achieve these missions. Commitment to exploring collaborative opportunities is critical if we want to preserve and build upon our core community values through the inevitable phases of cultural, economic, and environmental change. The current pattern of managing many separate efforts utilizing a limited pool of resources will not bring the results we all seek.

Maintaining Status Quo hinders the ability of the DownEast Acadia region to reach its true potential for conservation, preservation and interpretation of the region's nationally and locally significant cultural, historic, and natural resources. It hinders citizens ability to learn about or interact with, let alone value, their heritage and the surrounding landscape that helped shape them. It limits the region's capacity to develop economically vital heritage and outdoor tourism assets. It limits capacity to create cohesive experiences that tell a full story of the people and places that make our home special. Our Status Quo does not enable us as a region to build upon and leverage our mutual heritage and visions. It does not enable us to prioritize investments and development that affects individual communities and collective communities.

Alternative 2 – Local or State Management as a Heritage Area

Alternative 2 explores potential for local or state operation of a heritage area, independent of a federal NHA designation. This alternative includes a description of likely funding sources and potential for resource protection, interpretive programming and other potential outcomes under state or local administration.

The state of Maine does not have a heritage tourism program or a state heritage area program. The Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) houses the Maine Office of Tourism (MOT) and Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation. DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism works closely with both Offices to identify and promote culture and recreation unique to this region. MOT works with a Cultural Tourism Consultant and employs a Destination Development staff position. The Destination Development Specialist works with the Maine Woods Consortium to support tourism in the rural Maine Woods communities. The Bold Coast and Grand Lakes

regions of DownEast Acadia are destinations identified as priorities for state-level assistance with destination development.

Key components of state-wide marketing conducted by the Maine Office of Tourism (MOT) are outdoor recreation, scenic beauty, Maine-made products, and local culture as key components. MOT utilizes an independent contractor to assist communities and organizations in cultural heritage programs and houses a staff person dedicated to community guided Destination Development. The Maine Office of Tourism is a critical partner in marketing and promotion of the region.

The Maine Department of Transportation (Maine DOT) manages 14 State and National Scenic Byways. The National and State Scenic Byways programs support community-guided planning to preserve, maintain, protect and enhance unique intrinsic resources to elevate economic prosperity by broadening recreational and educational experiences for travelers. They also support education, conservation, and outdoor recreation opportunities for residents.



MAINE
SCENIC BYWAYS

Maine
VISITMAINE.COM

The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. The program is a grass-roots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as All-American Roads or National Scenic Byways based on one or more archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities.



Paid advertisement by DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism, from the 2021 issue of Maine Invites You, the official visitor guide for the State of Maine.

The DownEast Acadia region is home to five Scenic Byways, three of which are National. All of these Byways are predominantly promoted by DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism and MOT. The Bold Coast Scenic Byway was awarded National designation in February 2021. With this designation could come funds for basic infrastructure along the Bold Coast Scenic National Byway. The Schoodic National Scenic Byway has no State funds but does have good infrastructure and a solid volunteer management team able to raise minimal project funds from municipalities and foundation grants. The Black Woods Scenic Byway currently has adequate State funds for planning and some infrastructure and management. The Acadia All-American Road, Million Dollar View Scenic Byway, and Bold Coast National Scenic Byway do not currently have any planning or implementation funds.



Million Dollar View Scenic Byway – This State Scenic Byway begins in Danforth, a former lumber town in the Baskahegan River Valley. Nearby Weston is the location of an historic portage used by Native cultures and early settlers connecting Baskahegan Stream to Butterfield Landing on East Grand Lake. The Chiputneticook chain of lakes seen from the Byway are known for their recreational fishing, wildlife, and wilderness recreation. The scenic turnout provides unspoiled vistas of Mount Katahdin and Peekaboo Mountain. Photo by Meg Keay

Maine does not have a state or national designation program beyond the Scenic Byways program. The Scenic Byways program is highly important to regional efforts to elevate DownEast Acadia as an exemplary place to visit and immerse oneself in the unique culture, history, and landscape. However, it does not alone provide the breadth and depth of technical and financial assistance needed to advance heritage preservation beyond its current status in a meaningful way.

Alternative 3 – National Heritage Area Designation

Alternative 3 explores management through full Congressional NHA Designation. This alternative looks at likely increases in funding and potentials for resource protection, interpretive programming and other positive or negative results of designation.

The NHA program provides resources to aid development of programs and infrastructure that highlight locally important aspects of the people, history, and landscapes. It builds collaborations across interest groups that build capacity to organize & plan regionally and achieve mutual goals.

The National Heritage Area program supports people, environment, and the economy by recognizing the nationally significant cultural & natural heritage of a place. It nurtures a long-term ethic of stewarding important heritage resources by connecting people with the place where they live. The program contributes to quality of life through engagement of residents, especially youth and families, in telling our united but separate stories.

Designation as a National Heritage Area will create the need for an organization to become the official managing entity and representative of the NHA. This managing entity would be responsible for creating and implementing the Management Plan, which guides development

Alternatives Comparison

Alternative 1 Maintain Status Quo

- The region remains unchanged.
- No funding provided by National Park Service for development purposes.
- Hinders the ability of the Downeast Maine to reach its true potential
- Hinders citizens ability to value their heritage and the surrounding landscape that helped shape them.

Alternative 2 Local/State Management

- Lack of local capacity to manage yet another program without dedicated staff and funding.
- “The Maine DOT and National Scenic Byways programs do not alone provide the breadth and depth of technical and financial assistance needed to advance heritage preservation beyond its current status in a meaningful way.

Alternative 3 NHA Designation

- Provides resources to aid development of programs and infrastructure.
- Builds collaborations across interest groups.
- A managing entity would be responsible for maintaining a relationship with the National Park Service
- Reduced competition and duplication of local efforts.

and promotion of the program. The managing entity would be responsible for maintaining a relationship with the National Park Service. Any federal funding for the NHA would come to the management entity for administration and distribution of the program activities.

The National Heritage Area would be operated locally by a collaboration of community members from organizations, municipalities, businesses, educators, and individuals. Improved coordination and collaboration between heritage groups will improve regional strategies for heritage education and preservation, reduce competition between heritage groups, and reduce duplication of efforts. Improved coordination and collaboration through co-management is an opportunity to more effectively organize and deliver programs regionally rather than just locally, and jointly rather than independently.

The NHA program is an important tool to develop a sustainable tourism industry founded in local culture and outdoor heritage. Heritage-based tourism and outdoor recreation are large and growing economic industries for Maine and for DownEast Maine. DownEast Maine already attracts people interested in outdoor recreation and small communities, and we anticipate this will continue into the future.

Designation would bring national recognition to the region’s heritage and attract more people interested in connecting with the people and the place. With NHA Designation, museums, interpretive centers, historical societies, and other heritage venues would likely attract more

visitors and grow their membership and fundraising bases. Current efforts undertaken by individual organizations could be leveraged to strengthen, align, and coordinate advocacy, heritage stewardship, and educational activities.

Coordinated interpretation of individual resources would emphasize the interconnected nature of historic sites, linking resources to each other and communicating the bigger story

in a more holistic fashion. this will increase awareness of existing resources and attractions and show how the region's stories relate to one another, enabling visitors and regional residents to easily see and travel to other sites.

National recognition, effective cooperation between diverse heritage groups, and the opportunity to promote broader regional development goals could attract funding from larger foundations, allow competition for new funding related to economic development, and provide access to granting programs that individual organizations either are not eligible for or for which they would not be competitive. New funding would support activities of the Heritage Area and support a granting program to fund local organizations working to implement NHA management goals.

Designation as a National Heritage Area provides incentive and structure for constituent organizations to develop regional programs and priorities, identify cooperative strategies for implementation, and work in partnership with local communities, state and federal agencies, and tourism organizations. Downeast Maine is rich with organizations, local governments, community groups, business owners, and individuals who share the same values. Based on our need to develop stronger regional collaboration amongst our many existing heritage organizations, NHA designation provides the best framework and support for heritage organizations to more effectively implement our mutual and complementary goals.

Organizations and communities have an opportunity to proactively support development that reflects and continues important community values and livelihoods. If communities actively build upon their unique heritage stories, people will have greater awareness and understanding of our local culture and values. As people put their collective energies into protecting and sharing their stories with the world, it becomes more likely that people who visit and move to this region are aware of the personality and offerings of the place and people, and purposefully choose to be stewards of locally-important aspects of national heritage.