



Lubec Sunrise - Lubec is a working waterfront community perched on the rugged edge of the Atlantic Ocean, and is the easternmost town on the continental United States. During the spring and fall equinoxes, the first sunrise to light up the nation occurs at West Quoddy Head Lighthouse. Photo by Jerry Monkman.



CHAPTER 9

Local and Regional Economic Activity

Chapter 9 examines how the natural and cultural resources within a proposed Heritage Area might be affected by becoming a National Heritage Area.

Chapter 9 evaluates Criterion 8 of the required criteria for National Heritage Area designation.

Criteria 8) The proposal is consistent with continued economic activity in the area.

Chapter 9 evaluates the following elements of

DownEast Maine:

Data on:

Population and socio-economic conditions

Land use

Transportation

Tourism

Business and industry

Air and water quality

Consistency with Continued Local & Regional Economic Activity

Communities across Washington and Hancock counties share a goal to preserve and develop our natural and cultural heritage for economic stability and continuation of our unique and beloved way of life. Regional plans and programs for economic development, land use planning & zoning, preservation of wildlife and habitat, public services, workforce development, and quality of life include, as key elements of their success, preservation and expansion of our important heritage assets.

Regional and local economic and community improvement strategies highlight investment in public infrastructure and services, business and workforce expansion, development of housing, and attraction and retention of residents. Investments in natural resource protection support strategies critical to our region's heritage: fisheries, forestry, agriculture, aquaculture, outdoor recreation, hunting/fishing, nature-based tourism, wildlife habitat, ecosystem health, scenic beauty, and the arts.



Carriage Roads - The Carriage Roads and stone bridges in Acadia National Park were financed and directed by philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr., between 1913 and 1940. The 57 miles of woodland roads were designed for use by hikers, bikers, horseback riders and carriages. Forty-five miles of road are within what is now Acadia National Park. Granite from Hall Quarry on Mount Desert Island was quarried and transported by the construction crews for road material and bridge facing. Photo by Shelley Van Camp.

A National Heritage Area Feasibility Study must show that NHA designation and ensuing programs and projects will continue locally planned economic activity in the proposed Heritage Area. This

chapter provides information to assess the potential positive or negative implications for the following potentially “affected areas”:

- Population and socio-economic conditions
- Land use and transportation
- Tourism, business and industry

Regional Demography, Economy, Infrastructure & Environment

Population and socio-economic conditions

Demographics (per 2010 Census)	Washington County	Hancock County
Population	33,000	54,000
Population Density Per Square Mile	12	34
Most Populous Community	3,123	7,471
Median Household Income	\$34,859	\$47,533
Median Family Income	\$43,612	\$60,092
% Families Below Poverty Level	14.1	6.8
% Population Below Poverty Level	19.8	11.5
% Poverty Level for Ages 18 and Under	29.3	17.2
% Poverty Level for Ages 65 and Over	12.4	7.3

The proposed National Heritage Area incorporates parts of both Washington and Hancock Counties. The two counties share a similar heritage but have very different socio-economic and population conditions.

As of the 2010 Census, the population of Hancock County was just over 54,000, with a population density of 34 people per square mile of land. The most populous community in Hancock County is Ellsworth, with 7,471 people. The median income for a household was \$47,533 and the median income for a family was \$60,092. About 6.8% of families and 11.5% of the population were below the poverty line, including 17.2% of those under age 18 and 7.3% of those age 65 or over.

At this same time, the population of Washington County was just under 33,000, with a population density of 12 people per square mile of land. The most populous community in Washington County is Calais, with 3,123 people. The median income for a household was \$34,859 and the median income for a family was \$43,612. About 14.1% of families and 19.8% of the population were below the poverty line, including 29.3% of those under age 18 and 12.4% of those age 65 or over.

Land Use

The DownEast Acadia region remains one of the least developed areas of Maine. Land cover includes coastline and islands, maritime spruce and mixed hardwood forests, agricultural land, wild blueberry barrens, and mountains, lakes, rivers, marshes, and wetlands. Much of the DownEast Acadia region is rural, with more compact development concentrated in downtowns



Klondike Mountain Sunrise - This 46-acre preserve was originally owned by a local family which raised dairy cows and apples in the surrounding pasture near the base of the mountain. The name of the mountain references the intriguing story of two men who, in 1897, devised a scheme claiming that they could extract gold from the nearby seawater. These men worked as con artists who—after hiring hundreds of workers and collecting funds from investors—fled the area never to be prosecuted for their deception. Photo by Cathy Lookabaugh.

Land Use		
	Washington County	Hancock County
Size – Square Miles	3,258	2,345
Land	2,563	1,587
Water	695	758
% Conserved Land	25	12
# Towns	42	36
# Cities	2	1
# Unincorporated Villages	0	19
# Unorganized Territories	34	15
# Indian Reservations	2	0

and villages. The most urban commercial and industrial development occurs in Bucksport, Ellsworth, Bar Harbor, Machias, Eastport, and Calais.

Hancock County comprises 36 Towns and 1 City, 19 Unincorporated Villages, and 15 Unorganized Territories. Hancock County has a total area of 2,345 square miles, of which 1,587 square miles is land and 758 square miles (32%) is water.

Washington County comprises 42 Towns and 2 Cities, 34 Unorganized Territories, and 2 Indian Reservations. Washington County has a total area of 3,258 square miles, of which 2,563 square miles is land and 695 square miles (21%) is water.

Nearly 20%, or 702,654 acres, of the entire region are held in public or private conservation status with some restrictions on development.

Over 12% of Hancock County's total land area is conserved land; 25% of Washington County's is conserved.

Municipal Planning, Zoning, and Infrastructure Development

Very few communities in Washington County employ zoning ordinances beyond minimum Shoreland Zoning and Subdivision regulations required by the State of Maine. More towns in Hancock County employ zoning ordinances than in Washington County, but a large number do not. Those communities who do have zoning include minimal land use restrictions and design standards. Towns either have minimal or no sign standards outside of the public way.

Viewshed protection is accomplished primarily by private and municipal efforts through conservation purchases and donations. Some landowners voluntarily allow viewshed maintenance by municipalities or the Maine Department of Transportation. Scenic Byways in the region do not protect or otherwise regulate viewsheds; no community in DownEast Acadia has an open space or scenic viewshed overlay or ordinance.

Most communities within DownEast Acadia do have Comprehensive Plans, which provide the baseline for creation of land use zoning; many plans have expired and will need updating.

Many of our coastal communities have harbor management plans and work with state and federal agencies to procure lifelong access for commercial fishermen.

Some communities have downtown revitalization or bike/ped improvement plans in place and implement them as they can. Towns utilize Community Development Block Grant, Maine Coastal Program, and Recreational Planning funds for local improvements.

The Land Use Regulatory Commission governs land use in Unorganized Territories. Washington County completed a Community Guided Planning and Zoning process between 2015 and 2018. The plan lays out guidelines for land use that retains the abundant natural resources our economy depends upon while allowing for development that advances economic and community goals for the future.

Transportation

The Maine Department of Transportation partners with municipal governments, the Tribes, and regional planning organizations to assess, plan for, and implement transportation improvements. DownEast Acadia is bound together through a broad heritage, which includes transportation routes for employment, family, personal, recreation, and leisure travel. Seven major collaborative, two-county transportation planning projects have been conducted and updated in the past decade - including two scenic byways and a multi-use trail.

The Downeast Coastal Corridor is the major east-west transportation network connecting US Route 1, Bangor International Airport, and Interstate 95 with the coastal regions of Hancock and Washington County. Included are US Route 1 from Bucksport to Calais, State Route 9 from Bangor to Calais, and myriad minor arterial routes. Collector routes serve as connectors and short-cuts between the major arterial highways.

US-1 and SR-9, the primary highways, carry passenger and freight traffic. US-1 carries a larger percentage of commuter and tourism traffic and serves as the main street for many corridor communities. SR-9 carries a greater percentage of freight traffic, and also serves as a major international travel connection for passenger and freight service between Canada's Maritime Provinces and the interstate I-95 corridor in Bangor.



Down East Sunrise Trail - Active transportation routes include the 87-mile multi-use Down East Sunrise Trail, the 211-mile Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway, and two bicycling routes from southern Florida to Calais – the East Coast Greenway and US Bike Route 1. The bicycling routes connect with international routes just across the Canadian border, and ATV/Snowmobile trails connect to northern Maine and Canada. Photo courtesy of Sunrise Trail Coalition.

The DownEast Acadia region is served by Bangor International Airport and the Hancock County-Bar Harbor Airport. Bangor International Airport provides national and international commercial passenger and freight services, as well as civil defense operations. Bar Harbor Airport in Trenton offers chartered flights and regularly scheduled daily commuter service to Boston, Massachusetts. Car rental services are available at both airports. Several small municipal airports in each county serve private planes and emergency flights.

Minimal public transportation exists in DownEast Acadia, causing challenges to those seeking alternatives to single-passenger transportation. Downeast Transportation offers year-round bus service from Bar Harbor and Ellsworth to Bangor; West's Coastal Connection Bus Service offers daily service from Calais to Bangor. Concord Bus lines in Bangor is near the Bangor International Airport and connects with both DownEast Transportation and West's Coastal Connection. The

Island Explorer features ten seasonal bus routes linking lodging with destinations in Acadia National Park on Mount Desert Island and neighboring village centers.

Bucksport is a major port for inbound fuel shipments and Eastport hosts deep-water commercial shipping for pulp, paper and other bulk commercial cargo. Numerous smaller harbors support commercial fishing, recreational boating, cruise ships, and transient yachting or sailing. Smaller cruise ships visit Bucksport and Eastport, while cruise ships of all sizes visit Bar Harbor.

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Tourism, Business, and Industry

For the past two-plus decades communities within DownEast Acadia have partnered locally, regionally, and with state agencies to plan and implement projects, programs, strategies, and policies that leverage cultural and natural resources as an economic and community development tool. Although the plans, policies, and programs are varied and the oversight organizations are diverse, they all share a goal of health, education, continuity, and prosperity for the human, environmental, cultural, historic, business, and scenic assets of DownEast Acadia communities.

The Aroostook/Washington Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) vision statement is that:

“Our region is a place of abundant natural resources that is reflected in the beauty of our landscape and the potential for economic and social prosperity it offers. We value the individuality and endurance of our people while recognizing the strong sense of community and place that sustains us. We will create economic growth by focusing on sectors that best leverage these assets and by working to develop policies that promote private sector investment; while at the same time, retaining the quality of life that makes the region special.”

The Eastern Maine CEDS, which includes Hancock County, offers a vision to “Improve economic opportunity and increase wealth for the EMDC region’s communities, businesses and individuals”. Concepts to achieve this include forest products economy, emerging opportunities, sustainability and growth of businesses, leveraging assets, and advancing shared goals.

Sunrise County Economic Council's five-year Strategic Plan intends to initiate and facilitate the creation of jobs and prosperity in Washington County. Some key goals for regional economic development are to:

- Increase business investment capital
- Support new economic development opportunities
- Improve essential transportation infrastructure
- Strengthen the local food system

Regional economic development and municipal planning entities primarily involved in coordinating this work include:

- Sunrise County Economic Council
- Hancock County Planning Commission
- Northern Maine Development Commission
- Eastern Maine Development Corporation
- DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism
- Maine Downtown Center
- Island Institute
- Maine Sea Grant
- CEI
- Maine Small Business Development Center

State agencies closely engaged in regional economic development efforts in DownEast Acadia include:

- Maine Department of Transportation
- Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry
- Maine Department of Economic and Community Development
- Maine Office of Tourism
- Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation
- US Department of Environmental Protection Brownfields Redevelopment

Tourism

The travel and leisure industries contribute significantly to the economy of DownEast Acadia, a fact which has been mis-understood in the past but became painfully clear with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism is the officially designated Destination Marketing Organization for the region (per Maine Office of Tourism (MOT)).

DART's primary mission is to promote tourism in DownEast Acadia, Washington and Hancock Counties. DART works with organizational partners and businesses to provide opportunities for collaboration, education, product development and other programs to strengthen the position of the DownEast Acadia Region as an exemplary place to live, work, and play.

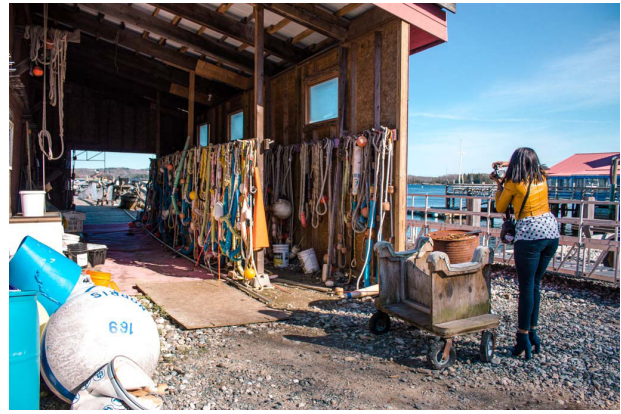
DART is composed of entities who work together to develop, manage, support and promote the best natural, recreational, and cultural assets in Washington and Hancock Counties. DART members and partners include chambers of commerce, economic development groups, regional planners, educational institutions, municipalities, professional business organizations, recreation and conservation groups, cultural/heritage groups, historical societies, business owners, state agencies, and more.

Examples of successful tourism-based, citizen-led economic development projects directly resulting from regional collaborations include:

- 5 State & National Scenic Byways
- Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway
- Downeast Fisheries Trail
- Maine Sculpture Trail
- Maine Ice Age Trail
- DownEast Acadia Birding Trail
- Down East Sunrise Trail
- A large and growing network of public access on conservation lands
- 6 Maine Downtown/Main Street America Affiliate communities

The Washington/Aroostook CEDS outlines these tourism goals:

- By 2023, increase overall dining and tourism revenues by 25%, employment by 15%, and grow non-peak season events by one a year.
- Market Aroostook and Washington County jointly to attract visitors and encourage longer stays.



Cultural Appeal – The accoutrements of the working waterfront industry include an array of brightly colored buoys, ropes, traps, bait-buckets, barrels, and more. For many, these tools of the maritime trade evoke nostalgia at days gone by, a vision of salty fishermen plying the seas, and an innate desire for raw connection with nature. Photo by The Blessing Bucket

- Promote adventure tourism in the region.
- Coordinate public (Aroostook County Tourism and DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism) and private marketing dollars to increase visitor interest and impact.
- Improve the quality and quantity of basic tourism information about customer demands and regional tourism products to guide improved visitation and spending.

Business

Entrepreneurialism is a deep-rooted cultural value and a necessity for survival in this region where business is often greatly influenced by the seasons. Apart from education, healthcare, research, and other institutions, DownEast Acadia is served mainly by small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Employment by Occupation - % of Population (Per 2018 ACS Census)		
	Washington	Hancock
Management, Business, Science, Arts	28	34
Service	19	19
Natural Resources, Construction, Maintenance	19	15
Self Employed (unincorporated business)	16	15
Unemployed	3.5	3

Source: 2010 Decennial Census

According to 2018 ACS Census data, approximately 28% of the workforce in Washington County is employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations; 19% in service occupations; and 19% in natural resources, construction, or maintenance occupations. Approximately 16% of workers are classified as self-employed in their own unincorporated business, and 3.5% were unemployed.

According to 2018 ACS Census data, approximately 34% of the workforce in Hancock County is employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations; 19% in service occupations; 19% in sales and office occupations; and 15% natural resources, construction, or maintenance occupations. Approximately 15% of workers are classified as self-employed in their own unincorporated business, and 3% were unemployed.

Employment by Industry – % of Population (Top 3)			
Washington	27.2% Education, Health Care, Social Assistance	12.2% Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Mining	11.6% Retail Trade
Hancock	26.7% Education, Health Care, Social Assistance	12.9% Retail Trade	11% Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodations, Food Service

Source: 2012 – 2016 American Communities Survey Census Bureau

Municipal and land use ordinances in most communities neither discourage nor incentivize specific development types. Comprehensive plans do outline small business as the most desired type of business development – such as leisure, entertainment, and personal services. Both Washington and Hancock Counties have small business development centers, community colleges, economic development entities, and entrepreneurial centers that provide workforce training plus technology and financial resources for small businesses.

Industry

Primary employing industries in Washington County are Education, health care, and social assistance (approximately 26%); agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining (approximately 13%); and retail trade (approximately 10%).

Primary employing industries in Hancock County are Education, health care, and social assistance (approximately 26%); retail trade (approximately 13%); and professional, scientific, management, and administrative (approximately 10%).

Washington County has always been the largest producer of wild blueberries in the world and is also the largest supplier of balsam wreaths. Aquaculture – mainly growing or harvesting seaweed, pen-rearing salmon, and seeding scallops and mussels – is an expanding industry in both Washington and Hancock Counties. Timber harvesting is an important industry in northern Washington County, from the raw product to finishing at the Baileyville Tissue Mill.

Commercial fisheries are critical to the entire coast of Washington County and much of coastal Hancock County. The highest lobster landings in the country occur in Stonington (Hancock County) and Jonesport (Washington County). During the Covid-19 pandemic, the fisheries

industry has been seriously impacted. Many organizations focus specifically on supporting the fisheries industries in Maine and provide great benefit to a diversity of seafood-dependent DownEast Acadia businesses, including the restaurant industry. Additionally, several local and regional organizations focus solely on research, education, technical, and financial assistance intended to sustain a resilient, innovative seafood industry. Municipalities and conservation organizations actively partner with State and private entities to protect and preserve waterfront parcels for both commercial and recreational access into perpetuity.



Tradition and Innovation - Woodland Pulp and affiliate companies St. Croix Tissue and St. Croix Chipping operate in Baileyville. Woodland Pulp has been an integral part of Baileyville since the early twentieth century, and today is the largest employer in Washington County, with over 300 employees. Woodland Pulp strives to promote sustainable forestry and minimize environmental impacts. They produce St. Croix Hardwood, a type of pulp made from locally sourced wood. St. Croix Tissue is a new, state-of-the-art tissue paper manufacturing company producing a full range of products for the growing national and international tissue markets. St. Croix Chipping chips 85 to 100 loads of tree length wood every 24 hours, 7 days a week. Photo source: stcroixtissue.com.

Conclusion

The DownEast Acadia region is strongly supported both locally, regionally, and at the state and national levels in economic development through industries that reflect local values. Engaging residents and potential residents around shared values to explore the benefits and opportunities that exist in the region will help attract and retain a sustainable population and demographic. Awareness of and interaction with heritage stories will strengthen pride-of-place and nurture stewards of our cultural and natural heritage – which in turn strengthens the economy and communities founded so deeply upon our unique heritage.

A National Heritage Area designation in DownEast Acadia will support continued economic development that celebrates and supports the people who live, work, and play here.