



Maine Woods Consortium

10/15/08 Coordinating Team Report

Organizational Transition

Per discussions at the September meeting, transition from the Maine Mountain Heritage Network to the Maine Woods Consortium is moving forward. A workplan for 2009 is under development to provide capacity for network management, program oversight, and capital investment. Work plans and budgets below are being used to build the EDA grant request and budget. Thanks to all of you who have participated so far.

Bruce Hazard, Mountain Counties Heritage prepared plans for general management of the MWC, estimating a 2009 budget at \$47,000, and also for communications support (website, newsletter, etc. – no budget estimate for communications yet). MCH also submitted a proposal for providing stewardship for the Landscape Resources Program (\$20,250); though expect to find a more qualified agency to take this role. **Mary Ann Hayes**, Maine Rural Partners, submitted a proposed work plan for information management (\$30,800) and for providing stewardship for Community Revitalization Program (\$28,200). **Bruce McLean**, MAGIC, prepared a proposed workplan for the Networked Economies Program stewardship (\$29,800). All three program area stewards are proposing to form advisory groups representative of a range of stakeholders. Advisory groups would assess needs, identify effective responses, select projects for capital investment and other support. **Dina Jackson**, AVCOG, prepared a workplan and budget for marketing (\$23,785) though she has not agreed to serve as steward (yet?). **Chris Shrum**, EMDC, will head up capital program design – no workplan or budget from him yet. Advisory committee already formed (see meeting notice below).

Tracy Stutzman, Maine Crafts Association has offered to join with Bruce McLean in stewarding the Networked Economies Program. **Tanya Swain** has expressed interest in working on indicators/evaluation area, maybe joining forces with **Ed Cervone** of Maine Development Foundation in this area (if Ed is willing/able per Mary Ann's suggestion). **Keith Bisson**, Coastal Enterprises Inc., has offered to prepare an analysis of the kinds of capital required by the projects already nominated. Bruce Hazard has spoken with both Keith and **Peter Taylor** of the Maine Community Foundation regarding providing financial management capacity.

Communications

Communicating the Transition: The communications program designed to raise awareness of the transition from the Maine Mountain Heritage Network to the Maine Woods Consortium has been completed. The mode of communication to Network members varied depending on their level of involvement. An email went out to all members; letters to program area participants. The website has been reworked with the new colors and logo as has the content and structure. The first newsletter of the Consortium, "Field Notes," went out in early October.

Coordinating Team members were given a CD with the logo, logo colors, letterhead and a press release to be used in their newsletters. This press release has been carried by the Maine Tourism Association and the Bangor Daily News. Members will forward over their newsletters coverage to Shaunacy for tracking.

Capital Investment Program

Consultant **Chuck Lawton** of Planning Decisions has completed a draft of recommendations as they apply to organization and governance of the MWC, organization of the capital investment program including criteria and process for setting priorities and selecting projects. Still to come: "Financing the Capital Investment Program." Chuck sub-contracted an essay on a social network strategy for the MWC from **Bazaar Strategies, LLC** which puts forward interesting ideas about network organization and process using web 2.0 technology. [Click here to view draft reports.](#)

Capital Investment Planning Team to meet: November 4 at 10 AM at EMDC.

Funding

The Betterment Fund has offered the Maine Woods Consortium \$25,000 to be used for rural tourism development in the rim counties. Betterment has said that this is a first installment on what they would like to be a more substantial investment. After conferring with planning groups for both Franklin County and Maine Woods RDT prototypes (see below), MCH elected to use the money to support a training program and also for identifying other potential RDT prototypes that might be supported by larger grants to come. (Pending review by MWC coordinating team.)

MCH additionally applied to the **Northern Forest Partnership Program** for supplemental support for the RDT training effort. Maine Rural Partners applied to the same program for support for developing a MWC information management system (letters of support from EMDC and CEI). MCH provided a letter of support to Cooperative Extension for a "Maine Woods" tourism research project. MCH also provided a letter for MeCEP for support of a research project focused on amenity based development in the rim counties (**David Vail** to lead project). **Bruce McLean** submitted a proposal for a second year of support for a panel making project, a perfect example of a "production network" per Mountain Made though maybe not directly related to MWC yet.

MCH has also applied to the **King and Jean Cummings Fund** for \$20,000 in support for its general management stewardship of MWC.

EDA Grant Request Update

Mike Eisensmith, Northern Maine Development Corp, convened a telephone conference of EDD heads and their representatives to MWC coordinating team. On the call: **Bob Thompson** and **Dina Jackson**, AVCOG; **Chris Shrum**, EMDC; **Ken Young**, KVCOG; **Bob Clark** and **Mike Eisensmith**, NMDC. Discussion of the EDA proposal and the general direction of MWC yielded consensus on value of the coordinated approach, pending review of proposal. Chris Shrum has circulated a draft EDA proposal (narrative only) which focuses on the capital investment program per advice from Alan Brigham (EDA). [\(Click here to view draft proposal.\)](#)

To be decided: who will the applicant be? Chris is trying to convene a second telephone conference to allow EDD reps to comment and sign off. Hoping to **submit by end of October!**

Programs/Landscape Resources

(Note: It is the goal of this program area to support multiple uses of landscape resources for maximum long term benefit to local communities and businesses. The program has focused on resource mapping and information sharing among stakeholder groups.)

Landscape Resources Advisory Team: MCH will convene a small advisory group this fall to help set an agenda for this group and to recruit a new steward. If you have ideas about good representatives to the advisory group, please forward them to Bruce Hazard.

Northern Franklin County Mapping Project: Recent conversations with Tanya Swain, former steward of this project, indicate that she is planning a meeting this fall with the Steering Committee to present a final report on the findings from the stakeholder interviews. ([View workgroup page for more information.](#))

Programs/Community Revitalization

(Note: It is the goal of this program area to support vibrant communities as places to live and visit. Work in this program area has focused on development of walking tours and interpretive centers.)

Community Revitalization Advisory Team: Mary Ann Hayes, Maine Rural Partners, is convening an advisory group representing a variety of stakeholders. She has great ideas re potential membership, but if you have suggestions, please let her know!

Knowledge Power Traveling Exhibit: The Traveling Exhibit is at the Kittery Visitor Center for the fall foliage season. Last year, approximately 45,077 travelers came through the Kittery Center in the month of October. For many visitors, the new exhibit will provide a first glimpse of the Maine Mountains, their remarkable natural beauty and cultural traditions.

Farmington Downtown Walking Tour: Good news on the Walking Tour front! According to Steve Kaiser, Farmington's Director of Community Development, the town's goal is to have all the bases and frames installed for the walking tour by the end of October and panels installed shortly thereafter.

Programs/Local Economies

(Note: It is the goal of this program area to support development of a diverse and robust regional economy through promoting creative and sustainable use of the region's cultural and natural assets.)

Mountain Made - Production Networks: Dina Jackson (AVCOG) has created a database of existing production networks and related service providers. The group will use this to design a production network support program. An old RBOG application is also being looked at for possible revision and resubmission.

Rural Destination Tourism: Work is proceeding on two Maine prototypes, Franklin County Tourism Network and Maine Woods Outdoor Recreation Tourism Network. Interest in training within both prototype planning groups has led to proposal for a Maine Woods Tourism Training Program. For more on these projects, go to respective workgroup pages on www.mainewoodsconsortium.org.

Next Meeting

Full day, face-to-face Coordinating Team meeting at EMDC Thursday December 4.