



Maine Woods Consortium Coordinating Team Conference Call Notes, 11/10/09

Participants: Keith Bisson, Coastal Enterprises, Inc; Gail Chase, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments; Mike Eisensmith, Northern Maine Development Commission; Mary Ann Hayes and Lucas Sanders, Maine Rural Partners; Bruce Hazard and Shaunacy Cobb, Mountain Counties Heritage; Dina Jackson, Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments; Phil Savignano, Maine Office of Tourism; Andy Whitman, Manomet Center for Conservation Science; and Mike Wilson, Northern Forest Center.

Key Decisions

- The Coordinating Team will meet 4 times a year in-person. A small rotating group (3-4 people) will work together to develop the agenda, recruit speakers, and create meeting materials.
- Members are each asked to approach their board about making a \$500 contribution for MWC to maintain the core functions of meeting support and communications.
- MWC should try to plug-in to large scale land conservation conversation and projects underway.

Individual To Do List

® **Andy**

1. Talk to Karin Tilburg and Alec Giffen.
2. Schedule conference call.

® **Bruce**

1. Phone calls to absent Coordinating Team members to determine future participation.
2. Revised RFP out to group with request for suggested contractors to fill the communications role.
3. Document to determine which member organizations can make a \$500 contribution to maintain the core functions of MWC.

® **Gail Chase**

1. Meeting support cost estimate for 15 hours per meeting, 4 times a year.

® **Lucas**

1. Send out link to database.

® **Shaunacy**

1. Finalize meeting schedule for 2010.

Meeting Notes

Structure/Procedure Recommendations. Bruce's transition out of a leadership role for MWC is making the group look at how the network operates. This is an opportunity to move from a "hub and spoke" model to a true network model with shared responsibilities. The Coordinating Team is being asked to step up their commitment to MWC.

The new process being proposed is that the group spend the last 30 minutes of the 4 face-to-face meetings per year discussing the next meeting agenda. Three or four members will be charged with crafting the agenda, inviting guests, and creating meeting materials.

The group will move ahead focusing for now on the basic core functions with an emphasis on information sharing and refining their voice as representatives of the Maine Woods. As funding opportunities and projects that need a more inclusive voice arise, committees will form to take advantage of these opportunities.

Core Functions. Some level of staff support is needed for both meetings and communications. Meeting support would include maintaining the email list, sending out notices, scheduling meetings, taking notes, and writing notes. Gail Chase believes there may be the potential for some staff support at KVCOG if funding is found. She will speak to Ken Young and get back to Bruce with a cost estimate for 15 hours per meeting/4 times a year to be folded into funding request.

The communications support will require more time since it includes the monthly newsletter and maintaining the website. Some Coordinating Team members had mentioned that they might be able to help with the website but it was unclear if this was just technical assistance. Bruce is going to build out the RFP and circulate it to the group with a request for names of private contractors who could possibly do this work.

Funding. There is currently no EDA funding on the horizon to pay for communications or meeting support. Bob Thompson at AVCOG is talking to Congressman Michaud's office about possible funding from the Northern Border Regional Commission.

Bruce will fold the communications and meeting support figures into a grant proposal. Conversations with a funder led Mike Wilson to believe that capacity building support funds might be available if the participating organizations offer a cash match. The grant deadline is January 15. Each Coordinating Team member is asked to approach their board about making a cash donation of \$500 to MWC. Bruce will circulate something to see which organizations could make a contribution. There were approximately 8 yes responses when asked if a funding contribution could be made with a caveat of needing board approval.

Large Scale Land Conservation Proposals. There is a lot of excitement and energy behind large scale conservation proposals in the Maine Woods. The Department of Interior is eyeing Maine as a test site for its Treasured Landscapes program that looks to develop new protection tools based on the unique conservation cultural, and economic values of the state that make traditional protection tools like a national park not viable. The Maine Great Forest Initiative is focused on keeping forests as forest by promoting the working forest concept. The current conversations are between land conservation organizations and forest owners. There is a lot of discussion of the need to continue the large scale flow of pulp and fiber out of the woods to support paper and biofuels with no discussion of the local community's economic and tourism development needs in relation to the forest. Perhaps some incentives for economic development and cultural preservation could be built into a proposal.

Bruce suggested that the Economic Development Districts and the local economic development agencies could help inform the conversation by creating an overview of the local economies makeup. An ideal piece of information would be the number of jobs directly and indirectly associated with the forest. This could be used to create models to show the impact of different proposals on local economies.

The group agreed that MWC should try to engage in the conversations shaping large scale land conservation projects like Treasured Landscapes. Andy will talk to Karin Tilburg and his landowner contacts to see where it would be appropriate and politically comfortable for MWC to enter into the Treasured Landscapes conversation. He suggested creating a document focused on the unique economic and cultural features related to the forests that connect directly to the well-being of the communities. Andy will organize a conference call after he speaks with Karin Tilburg and Alec Giffen. Anyone who wants to participate should email Andy.

Next Meeting. Shaunacy will finalize a meeting schedule for 2010. The February meeting will focus primarily on the large landscape conservation projects. For the April meeting, a discussion of school consolidation in the context of service delivery to the rim counties. Heather Perry from Greenville would be a good speaker.

Meeting adjourned at 1:20 PM.