Moosehead Lake Destination Development Initiative

Long-term Community Re-development: A Work in Progress
The Moosehead Lake Region

1.25 million acres
- Bigger than some states
- Nearly half in conservation

Over 100 lakes and ponds
- Highlighted by 75,000 acre, 40 mile long Moosehead Lake
- Over another 60,000 acres of water

Population of 4,200
(2.5 persons per sq. mile)
- Greenville – 1,646 residents
- Rockwood – 320 residents
- Jackman – 718 residents
- Shirley – 183 residents
The Catalyst

- Loss of Anchor Businesses
  - Lumber Mill
  - Ski Area
  - Whitewater rafting
  - Leisure Life Lodge

- School & C. A. Dean Hospital in jeopardy
  - 25% loss of population
  - School enrollment 1996 – 374; 2018 – 216;
  - Grades K-12 – 88 in 2018;
    - projected: 68 in 2020; 48 in 2024
The Catalyst

Butler Development Model

Butler’s Model

1. Exploration
2. Involvement
3. Development
4. Consolidation
5. Stagnation!

Rejuvenation?
Slower decline?
Major decline?
The North Maine Woods

10 Million Acres

The largest undeveloped forest east of the Mississippi River

*NASA Satellite Photo*
The Catalyst

❖ Changing forest ownership, new conservation framework

Figure 6. The number of acres owned by Industry (red) and by various newer forest owner types combined (blue) in Maine between 1994 and 2005.

Figure 7. Map of Maine timberland ownership by owner type in 1994 and 2005. See Table 1 for a description of owner types. (GIS data from J.W. Snow Co., Old Town, Maine.)

Source: Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, “Changing Timberland Ownership in the Northern Forest and Implications for Biodiversity” December 2005
The Catalyst

The Landscape in 1996
The Catalyst

The Moosehead Region today
The Action

- Reformed defunct Economic Development group
- Hired Roger Brooks: Branding
  - Brand Leadership Team
- Maine Office of Tourism
  - “Pilot Project”
Artisan Village

The Action
The Action

- Town Comprehensive Plan & Downtown Revitalization Plan
- Community Destination Academy
- Tourism Innovation Program and Façade Grants
The Maine Woods Initiative

The Appalachian Mountain Club’s Strategy for Land Conservation in the 100-Mile Wilderness:

❖ Landscape-scale conservation
❖ New outdoor recreation destination
   ❖ Sustainable forestry
❖ Regional economic development, community partnerships and local environmental education
The Action

Innovative Conservation Model & Funding Strategy:

Land Management:
Developing AMC’s land through improvements in recreational access, restoring wildlife habitats and sustainable forestry

Nature-Based Tourism:
Fostering recreational access to AMC’s lands through world-class lodging, guiding and gear

Youth Education:
Using AMC’s lands as a setting to develop environmental literacy, foster self-efficacy and community support
The Difference

AMC Maine Woods Initiative

Land Conservation
- 75,000 acres permanent conservation
- 42 miles of trout stream restoration

Outdoor Recreation
- 130 miles of non-motorized trails
- 3 Wilderness Lodges

Community Development
- Environmental Ed. programs reach 2000 local kids
- Supporting local tourism development efforts

Sustainable Forestry
- Restoring Age & Species Diversity
- Revenue supports operations and local economy

Economic Impact 2003-2017

- $57 million invested, leading to a total economic impact of:
  - $28 million in Piscataquis County
  - $35 million in the State of Maine

- Appalachian Mountain Club Employment in 2017...
  - Direct employment = 31 FTE jobs (over 8% of employment in tourism & recreation sector)
  - Indirect employment = 89 FTE jobs in Piscataquis County, 114 FTE jobs in State of Maine

Source: MWI 2017 Economic Impact Analysis, Dr. David Vail, Adams-Catlin Professor of Economics, emeritus at Bowdoin College
The Difference

AMC Maine Wilderness Lodges

In 2018: Approximately 4,000 unique visitors, 10,000+ overnight stays
10-Month Operation. Peak Season Months: February-March & July-September
55% New England States, 35% Maine, 8% Other U.S., 2% International

AMC Visitor Spending In Moosehead Lake Region: 2003-2017 = $1.6 Million
20% spend an overnight at another lodging property in Greenville
25% visit a local historic site or cultural institution
67% eat at local restaurants
77% make purchases at local retailers

2017 Direct Visitor Spending in Local Economy = $197,000
The Difference

- Local Engagement and Awareness
- Tourism Master Plan
- Downtown Plan
- New Business Owners
- Increased Business over the last 1-3 years
The Essentials

- Anchor Businesses – AMC
- Anchor Funding – Plum Creek now Weyerhaeuser
- Professional Expertise – Brooks & Future IQ
The Toughest Challenge

- Local Politics
- Organizational Capacity
- Getting things done efficiently

“politics is more difficult than physics”
Albert Einstein
The Best Advice

- Build Grassroots up
- Stabilize/build organizations first
- Get internal house in order first – before you start marketing
- Deliver tangible products
Moosehead Lake – America’s Crown Jewel