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**TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS ENVISION A SUSTAINABLE PATH:
STRENGTHENING MAINE'S NO. 1 INDUSTRY THROUGH
THE BLAINE HOUSE CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

By

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A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

(in Forestry)

The Graduate School

The University of Maine

May 2006

Advisory Committee:

Wilbur F. LaPage, Faculty Associate in Forest Resources, Co-chair

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**MAINE STAKEHOLDERS ENVISION A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PATH:
STRENGTHENING THE STATE'S NO. 1 INDUSTRY THROUGH
THE BLAINE HOUSE CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

By Elizabeth Munding

Thesis Co-chairs: Dr. Wilbur F. LaPage and Dr. John J. Daigle

An Abstract of the Thesis Presented
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science
(in Forestry)
May 2006

Tourism, as Maine's No. 1 industry, draws approximately 44 million visitors annually who spend \$6 billion and contribute \$340 million in sales tax. Despite these figures, annual statistics show zero growth or, often, loss, with the exception of the outdoor recreation sector. The tourism industry, made of government bodies, recreation associations and individual businesses, depends on the health of the natural resources and the compliance of related players, such as landowners. Discontent exists with the state and the industry's leadership. The quandary comes in determining which actions to take to improve the state's existing nature-based tourism into a sustainable industry that nurtures the natural and cultural resources as it develops economic opportunities.

On Nov. 17, 2003, Gov. John Baldacci hosted the Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-based Industries to gather stakeholders together. For the first time, tourism was included at the same table as the other natural resource industries to enhance how they operate individually and together. The tourism sector produced four proposals: increased educational efforts, strengthened state government roles and responsibilities, enhanced economic development planning and improved branding strategies.

This study, independent of the conference and funded by the Office of Tourism, gathered voices of tourism stakeholders to understand opinions on interrelated topics covering the entire state. Methods included semi-structured interviews of 43 private, public and non-profit stakeholders placed in three tourism categories – direct, indirect and related. Direct stakeholders sell a tourism product or experience; indirect stakeholders come from non-tourism businesses, such as landowners; and related stakeholders work for government, non-profits or academia. The purpose of this study is to pinpoint what is threatening the industry and to gain an understanding of the potential for a unified sustainable tourism vision. Participants were asked to describe the present state of the industry, what is being done well, what is being

done poorly, recommendations for action and an ideal for the industry. Qualitative inquiry, used increasingly in tourism research, details richness and complexity. Responses were analyzed in the context of the Blaine House recommendations.

Findings reflect the disorder of the industry, capturing a frustrated tone pervasive at all levels.

Recommendations can develop opportunities incorporating sustainability principles. Suggestions include:

- Create an interagency state tourism board, including paid private entrepreneurs, to have all relevant parties at the same table
- Broaden the mandate of the Office of Tourism to do more than marketing, such as infrastructure and community development
- Design a master plan, through industry and government efforts, to distribute to towns to make them aware of tourism's potential and to allow them to implement their own strategies
- Analyze land access to allow or limit recreational experiences to decrease user conflicts, ensure high-quality opportunities and maintain good landowner relations

In conclusion, tourism's future depends on more analysis of stakeholder input so industry leaders can have buy-in from varied players and can guide policy. In the process, the industry needs to measure success by the quality of the experience, which will ensure return visitation with economic, ecological and cultural benefits.

DEDICATION

To my dog Chance –
who has traveled with me
as I've studied tourism
throughout Maine

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my study's three dedicated committee members for reading hundreds of pages multiple times over as drafts of this huge project. With enthusiasm, Wilbur F. LaPage shaped the study, and with patience, John J. Daigle and Kathryn J. Olmstead made thorough editing marks. At the completion of this tourism study, I'm sure they are ready for a much-needed vacation – taken in a sustainable tourism locale, of course. I'd also like to thank the Office of Tourism for funding this comprehensive project that seeks constructive criticism in order to better the industry. Real credit goes to the 43 stakeholders who gave of their time but moreso of their hearts to voice the path tourism should take in Maine. Finally, I'd like to thank the Parks, Recreation and Tourism program in the Department of Forest Management for its support.

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CHAPTER 1: THE TOURISM LANDSCAPE

INTRODUCTION

After a long day at the office, Dianne Tilton thought of Maine's fisheries. She would rather have thought of what to fix for dinner, but the regional economic development expert still had more work to reel in before heading home. As she left the Sunrise County Economic Council in Machias, she loaded her car with the new Downeast Fisheries Trail brochures. The region had crafted a tourist brochure meant to help visitors learn their way around this rural area. Although multiple organizers had designed and placed onsite interpretive panels highlighting fish species at various locations, not all the project's pieces were in place. This only became evident after the fact. How would the brochures be distributed? Who would be responsible for this? "On my way home, I was trying to drop some off," she said. "... We didn't have money to market the trail beyond just having the brochure around, and no one had the resources to make sure the brochures got distributed." Organizers had planned to monitor the trail's popularity through a thank-you card that visitors could send in. Ultimately, the project started to fall apart. "We tried to implement something, and we've tried to track the result," she said. "The state wants to know how many people [the trail] attracted this year, but in the rural areas, you can't expect to do it that way."

The Downeast Fisheries Trail is not the first time Tilton has seen little to no payoff during more than a decade of regional economic work. "We used to have a plan and the capacity issue is what undid it. I mean capacity of local groups to do the work, whether volunteers or staff," she said. "... My organization does not have enough resources to help coordinate and get done the marketing for Washington County." Stakeholders, such as Tilton, have become frustrated at times with Maine tourism.

Tourism throughout Maine has stumbled frequently, despite the fact that 44 million tourists spend \$6.1 billion annually as part of the state's No. 1 industry (Longwoods International, 2003). Tourism, argue stakeholders, is about more than marketing – it's about infrastructure, accessibility, funding and resource protection as part of a comprehensive plan. Maine's entire tourism product – referred to as nature-based tourism because visitors come primarily to experience the natural resources – can't be designed as a Disneyland theme park. The expansive scope of a statewide nature-based tourism strategy, highlighting scenic mountains, lakes and ocean, is more complex than a build-it-and-they-will-come manufactured

attraction. “In my area, 10 years ago, the only way people thought we could have a tourism industry would be a water slide or some big attraction to draw people. Through our work, there is more of an acceptance that the (rural) way we are is sort of a competitive advantage,” Tilton said. “. . . You don’t buy a ticket to go see a fishing community, but rather it’s just there. It’s an approach you need to think through because it’s not a typical animal.” Not the typical animal is right; meet the goose that laid a golden egg here. Maine stakeholders must dialogue about what is succeeding and what is threatening to kill the goose. The quandary comes in determining which actions to take to improve the state’s existing nature-based tourism landscape into a sustainable industry that nurtures the natural and cultural resources as it develops economic opportunities.

This study will explore how tourism operates in Maine by speaking to industry members who offer words on the current state of tourism and the potential to improve it. Can Maine’s tourism path be redefined? The objective is to use stakeholder dialogue, which documents the fragmentation of the industry, to find a unified sustainable tourism vision. Stakeholder comments are compared to the state’s most up-to-date tourism goals developed through the Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-based Industries in 2003. This thesis shows how stakeholder comments mirror – whether in agreement or disagreement – the Blaine House conference proposals (Blaine House Conference Planning Committee, 2004). The goal is to offer a clearer understanding of stakeholder desires so industry leaders can take appropriate actions to have long-term buy-in and commitment from the state’s varied players. As an outcome, stakeholders will have the opportunity to guide current and future policy on Maine’s natural resources as connected to the tourism industry. Recommendations will assist the industry in developing and expanding nature-based opportunities in a manner consistent with the principles of sustainable management. Suggestions include restructuring the way state government directs the tourism industry, creating a statewide brand to promote entrepreneurs, training a quality workforce, designating access to land to decrease user conflicts and creating a master development plan that empowers rural communities to embrace tourism, amongst other elements.

Tourism, which is the world’s No. 1 industry resulting in 760 million international trips in 2004 (World Tourism Organization, 2005), receives harsh words at times in the academic literature. This is, in part, because tourism has been seen as unsustainable. Although tourism can have beneficial consequences

for the environment, prominence has been given to the negative impacts on the natural and built environment and on host communities. Tourism has been described as an inherently unsustainable human activity that in the long run contributes to environmental destruction (Pigram, 2000). The industry has failed not in numbers but in conceptually linking interrelated elements. "Tourism is at a stalled stage in understanding how communities emerge from the pack in attracting visitors. Realization of demand is more complicated than urban proximity, a rich attraction base, a strong private sector mix, capable leadership and volunteerism, and clear goals for maximizing economic return" (Koth, 1999). Scholars address tourism's challenges by documenting alternative forms from nature-based to eco to sustainable tourism. The literature goes into detail breaking down the segments to lend credence to the positive, or potentially positive, sub-parts of the industry. Nature-based tourism is defined as a marketing tool that does not have to promote environmental conservation, political and economic empowerment of local populations or cultural preservation (Ziffer, 1989). Ecotourism refers to responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of the local people (Western, 1993). Sustainable tourism is development in an area, community or environment in a way and at a scale that it remains viable indefinitely and doesn't degrade or alter the environment, whether human or physical, to the point that it prohibits the progress and well-being of other activities and processes (Butler, 1993).

Market potential is leading destinations, such as Maine, to pursue sustainable tourism. "The green concept allows the tourist industry to ... open up new areas for the more discerning (and expensive) range of the market, and tourists can enjoy the holiday they want with a clear conscience" (Wheeler, 1998). Sustainable tourism, therefore, can be an answer, or part of one, for many areas. Developing sustainability principles does not call for a complete overhaul of the industry. Cruise ships, for example, do not appear to fit sustainability simply due to their mass tourism operations but can support basic principles. "Such ships often benefit local communities, the people on board infrequently travel into the pristine environments they so enjoy from a distance and so do not directly impact them, and finally gain knowledge about natural processes through on-board interpretation" (McCool, 2004).

With any form of tourism, outcomes vary over time in a community. The tourism life cycle, as R.W. Butler termed the theory, might produce disappointing results. The typical system begins with a slow growth in product demand and then a period of rapid expansion that's followed by decline. The six stages

of the destination life cycle are: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and rejuvenation or decline (Butler, 1980). Communities are not static, therefore, progressing from one stage to another. "Initial euphoria over tourism benefits is overtaken by apathy as visitation regularizes, with further progression to irritation due to altered lifestyle and even overt antagonism if measures to assure sustainability, balance and limits are not imposed" (Koth, 1999). The rate at which a tourism community develops is determined by its perceived attractiveness for living and economic investments. Variables used incorporate the number of visitors, type of attractions, range of facilities, accommodations and amenities, extent of local control, expenditures, advertising and impacts. Prior to stagnation, the tourism life cycle is more complicated. "At first there is a lack of tourist facilities, amenities and infrastructure, then a 'tourism landscape' shaped by the industry emerges, whereas the dominance of tourist services may later create an economic dependency. Attractions shift from their emergence out of 'authentic' natural and cultural resources to an increase emphasis on the human-made and built environment. With increasing flows of capital investment, development control is likely to pass out of control of local entrepreneurs into the hands of outside investors. More and more widespread advertising and promotion are necessary in the later stages to maintain the rapid growth rate" (Koth, 1999). To avoid stagnation, destination maintenance must be retained. The best option is rejuvenation sought through expanded development into untapped natural areas. Appealing to special-interest groups, such as ecotourists, is likely. If decline results, then expect continued overuse of resources, non-replacement of the aging infrastructure and decreased competitiveness. Determinants in the rate of visitation decline include location in relation to major markets, diversity of the tourism base and planning effectiveness (Hovinen, 1982).

THE RESEARCHED LANDSCAPE

Although it is not possible to section out sustainable tourism numbers from the worldwide general tourism statistics, the amount of outdoor recreation trips in Maine has grown. Revenues from this sector show more than a 40-percent increase from 2001 to 2003 (Longwoods International, 2004). Maine stakeholders aim to achieve a recreation-based sustainable industry, even if individuals define it differently from one another or from the academic literature. In actuality, the idea of sustainable tourism in Maine is

not threatening as it follows already established concepts of sustainable forestry, sustainable agriculture and sustainable fisheries.

As evidence of Maine's tourism-strengthening commitment, the state has put several recent initiatives in place. The Maine Office of Tourism produced a Strategic Five-Year Plan in 2002 (Maine Office of Tourism, 2002). The Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-based Industries created participant dialogue in 2003. The Maine Tourism Commission's Natural Resources Committee prepared a nature-based tourism report requested by and for the Maine Legislature in 2004. As a result of these studies, Gov. John Baldacci hired a tourism consultant, Fermata, in 2004 to identify community-based pilot projects (Fermata, Inc., 2001 and 2002). Its recommendations were released a year later (Fermata, Inc., 2005 and 2005a). Tourism's evolution from plain-Jane to ecotourism or sustainable niche tourism is appropriate as "eco" means connected, which is what stakeholders have begun to accomplish through dialogue.

At an operational level, the Office of Tourism and the Maine Tourism Commission (MTC) work hand in hand. The Office of Tourism oversees day-to-day operations with input from the MTC advisory body (24 industry representatives appointed by the governor) on marketing and input from the MTC's Natural Resources Committee (NRC) on use and protection. The MTC communicates back to its industry and acts as that point of contact for private stakeholders. The Office of Tourism and the MTC control the annual Office of Tourism budget, set at \$7.2 million in 2004 and roughly \$7.5 million for 2005 and 2006. Increases occurred, in part, due to the new dedicated funding formula, derived from the meals and lodging tax in which the Office of Tourism budget garners five percent of the total seven percent lodging tax collected. The remaining 95 percent of the tax is placed into the legislature's General Fund. (The tax went into effect in 2004. In 2003, without the dedicated funding, the budget was \$6.9 million.)

Despite these commitments, Maine's tourism carries a lot of baggage from multiple viewpoints – residents, businesses and government. Mainers must realize that the tourism industry is more than having natural resources with an invitation to come. "How do you promote the natural resources as a way that promotes revenue? If you just promote natural resources and say, 'Oh, come see,' you are just sharing, and it's not really an industry," Tilton said. The researched setting is conflicted, without a plan and coordination, according to stakeholders.

Inside the industry, polarized business and environmental sides do not share a vision, some said. The complaint is that industry officials develop everything while environmentalists preserve everything. One wonders if it is possible to have increased protection with increased visitation. Many tourism stakeholders believe it is possible, but this places them on the defense, forcing industry members to explain their need to utilize nature. Ski Maine, a non-profit organized in 1960 that represents 18 Maine alpine ski areas, for example, justifies its water use for snowmaking, cutting ski trails and constructing sewer and power lines to build the industry. The general friction leads to poor planning as no one addresses the conflict, resulting in a lack of industry resolutions. The status quo, then, equates as governmental disinterest with zero feedback to tourism entrepreneurs. Of the many who feel pushed aside by government, for example, are the schooner boat operators, who seek a clear answer from town officials on the right to enter their crowded harbors. Feeling unwelcome, windjammer operators find no room to dock in town harbors due to increased moorings. “In Northeast Harbor, we used to be able to anchor,” said Kip Files, owner of the three-masted schooner Victory Chimes out of Rockland, “but now no boats are allowed, and no one is saying, ‘I’m sorry’ or even, ‘Don’t come back.’ Because towns have no planning, then anyone could put moorings down. Bucks Harbor started out with 45 and now has over 400.” Outside the industry, Maine’s stagnant tourism market and its stakeholders are not thought of well. Treated as a stepchild to the other natural resource industries, tourism struggles to gain recognition from residents and the other natural resource industries for itself, its stakeholders and its services.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

Research Purpose. The Maine tourism industry is struggling to improve, as documented through meetings with principal stakeholders throughout the state. Interviewed stakeholders were chosen by state government-related organizations. The overarching goal is to foster cultural and natural resource activities rather than go-carts and putt-putt golf courses. This study examines some of the causes for inconsistent approaches within the Maine industry so that a more workable model for tourism development can be attained. In the wide body of general literature, previous research has focused on a specific topic – such as marketing, government or education’s role – or a specific region – such as an island. This study attempts to

understand stakeholder opinions on a broad range of interrelated topics covering a broad area, such as an entire U.S. state. This research, therefore, serves as the first comprehensive qualitative study of the Maine landscape. Limitations exist, however. Many topics related to this research, some of which are named in this study, could be developed into an entire thesis but are treated at a minimal level here. These topics include private land access, easement purchases, road development and branding. This study does not inform the full discussion of these issues. The present research only intends to shed light on stakeholder desires by defining problems and providing solutions when possible.

Qualitative Inquiry. Qualitative inquiry has been used increasingly in tourism research. The standard quantitative data reduction techniques simply cannot capture the richness and detail in the chain of casual effects and secondary impacts. Thus, this multi-phased study is driven by both recent industry documents and interview analysis as forms of qualitative inquiry that should provide insights into the complexity of the tourism development process in grass-roots situations (Koth, 1999).

Thesis Outline. The remainder of this thesis is organized in the following manner: Chapter 2, called “Background of the Study,” presents statistics to illustrate the current tourism landscape and the significance of the industry to Maine’s economic future. It is an overview of what is known about the Maine tourism landscape and about the worldwide industry through the academic literature. Chapter 3, called “The Research Framework,” poses the range of research questions within a detailed description of the research setting and brief historical description of the tourism industry, including a timeline of initiatives. The chapter also explains this study’s research methodology, including the three categories in which stakeholders are placed. Chapters 4 through 7 analyze the current status of tourism development through the study’s stakeholder interviews in comparison to the Blaine House Conference proposals. Throughout these four chapters, factors affecting sustainability are highlighted. Specifically, Chapter 4 focuses on education’s role, Chapter 5 on state agency roles and responsibilities, Chapter 6 on economic development planning and Chapter 7 on branding.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

THE TOURISM NUMBERS

The state of the industry can be analyzed more comprehensively when numbers are clearly presented. These sometimes-surprising statistics can encourage dialogue between stakeholders, a goal of this thesis, so that steps can be taken to assess and improve tourism. The numbers show that Maine tourism is stagnant, a problem for its stakeholders who depend on its success in order to continue a quality life in Maine. Without a plan, the neon “Vacationland” sign flashing at Maine’s border can no longer counteract the flat market. Many of the numbers that follow come from the Office of Tourism visitor survey reports prepared by Longwoods International, a Canadian research firm contracted to conduct Maine’s annual assessment.

As context, Maine’s physical landscape is diverse with beauty that attracts those from near and afar. The state contains 3,500 miles of rugged shoreline and 19.75 million acres, about half of that acreage is referred to as the Northern Forest. The Department of Conservation (DOC) oversees 17 million acres of forestland, 47 parks and historic sites and more than 480,000 acres of public reserved lands. Only 6.75 percent of Maine’s land is publicly held, which is below the national average (Land for Maine’s Future, 2004). Maine has 1.25 million acres of publicly owned conservation land and 120,000 acres of public conservation easements on private lands. Maine land trusts hold 306,000 acres of conservation land in fee and 1 million acres in easements on private lands (LMF, 2004).

Overall, the statistics indicate tourism is Maine’s No. 1 industry overshadowed by low pay for the state’s largest work sector. Tourism employs 10 percent of the job base at 87,000 direct jobs or more than the other four natural resource industries – forestry, agriculture, fishing and aquaculture – collectively do at only 8 percent (Natural Resources Committee, 2004, and Lachance, 2003). Also, tourism contributes 7 percent of the gross state product, at \$2.5 billion, which is more than agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture combined. If forestry is included, however, the collective non-tourism natural resource industries contribute more with 10 percent of the gross state product (Vail, 2003).

Maine’s 1.3 million people hosted 26 million out-of-state tourists in 2003. With in- and out-of-state tourists combined, Maine entertained 44 million tourists in 2003. These trips were dominated by day

trips (Longwoods, 2004). Thirty-five million day trips showed growth from 30 million approximately five years ago, but the 9 million overnight trips has stagnated practically for this same time period (Longwoods 2003).

Tourism accounted for \$6.1 billion in direct expenditures and \$344 million in annual sales tax revenues in 2003. The direct expenditures figure is down from \$6.2 billion in 2002 and represents zero growth. For the past three years, the state's tourism expenditures have shown an anemic 1 percent growth, mirroring the sluggish national economy, and only a 6-percent growth since 1998 (Longwoods, 2003).

Note: U.S. travel has stayed stagnant for the past few years with a 1-percent decrease in overall trips and a 1-percent increase in marketable pleasure trips and a 6-percent decrease in business trips from 2003 to 2002 (Longwoods, 2003).

The Maine Office of Tourism's 2004 annual budget was \$7.2 million and roughly \$7.5 million for 2005 and 2006. All of these are an increase from the 2003's \$6.9 million budget. The budget increase is due primarily to the new dedicated funding formula derived from the 7 percent meals and lodging tax. Five percent of the total meals and lodging tax goes to the Office of Tourism and the other 95 percent goes to the state's General Fund.

Maine's share of the northeastern market has declined from 3.5 percent to 3.3 percent (Longwoods, 2003). Maine's regional market is defined as the New England states, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. Maine's day trip market includes Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont (Longwoods, 2003). Based on tourism revenues, Maine's national ranking as an overnight U.S. travel destination slipped from 38th in 2000 to 39th in 2001 and back to remain 38th in 2002 and 2003 (Longwoods, 2004). Note: Take these rankings with caution, as they are only regarding overnight travel, and the state's day-trip market is stronger. As context, the entire New England travel market could do better. In 2003, Massachusetts ranked the highest in overnight travel at 28th with Connecticut at 35th, New Hampshire following Maine at 39th, Vermont at 47th and Rhode Island dead last at 50th (Longwoods, 2004).

With some of the big-picture numbers on the table for review, it's valuable to examine some segments in depth. Every state seeks statistics on the frequency of trips to expenditures to types of trips to

tourist origin. The hope is that the numbers data can allude to what Maine is doing right and doing wrong to identify the industry's next steps.

Frequency of Trips. Tourism's 44 million trips in 2003 break down into 35 million day trips (79 percent) and 9 million overnight trips (21 percent) in 2003 (Longwoods, 2004).

- Out-of-staters take 7.2 million (80 percent) overnight trips and 19 million (54 percent) day trips. Mainers take 1.9 million (20 percent) of the state's overnight trips and 16 million (46 percent) day trips. (Longwoods, 2003) Note: Nearly four-fifths of Maine tourists make day trips compared to just one-fifth nationally (Travel Industry Association of America, 2002).

Travel Expenditures. Day trips in 2003 contributed \$3.5 billion (57 percent) financially. Overnight trips contributed \$2.6 billion (43 percent) financially (Longwoods 2004).

- Out-of-state travelers spent \$4.4 billion (or approximately 70 percent of total \$6.1 billion expenditures), dividing about half at \$2.3 billion on day trips and \$2.1 billion for overnight trips (Longwoods, 2004).
- Mainers spent \$1.7 billion (or approximately 28 percent of the total \$6.1 billion expenditures) combined on day and overnight (Longwoods, 2004).
- Survey data show that day-trippers spend an average of just \$61 per person per day, compared to overnight travelers' \$136 per person per day. (TIA, 2002).
- Overnight trips to Maine generate average sales of \$349 per trip at an average of 4.6 nights per trip (University of Maine Tourism Center Committee, 2004).

Out-of-state Tourist Origin. Out-of-staters accounted for more than half of Maine's day-trip travel market with 41 percent from Boston and 13 percent from other day-trip areas. That's approximately 15 million day-trippers per year who come from greater Boston alone. Out-of-staters took 79 percent of the overnight trips with 56 percent by regional folks and 23 percent by folks from beyond the region. Looking at where the out-of-staters are coming from for overnight trips: 30 percent from Massachusetts, 10 percent

from New York, 9 percent from Connecticut, 8 percent from New Hampshire and 5 percent from Pennsylvania (Longwoods, 2004).

- Four of five overnight visitors (80 percent) come from the New England and the Mid-Atlantic states, a figure that has changed little in 30 years (Longwoods, 2002 and Maine Vacation Travel Analysis Committee, 1974).
- Maine – more accurately, the south and midcoast regions – lies within a day’s drive of some 50 million affluent Americans and Canadians, more than 20 million of whom are aware of Maine as a destination but have never visited us (Vail, 2003).

Types of Trips. Overall, shopping was the No. 1 Maine trip type in 2003 by an almost 2-to-1 margin over outdoor recreation and touring (Longwoods, 2004).

- Of the 35 million day trips, 60 percent were marketable, such as shopping, outdoor, touring and beach trips, with 32 percent to visit friends and relatives and 8 percent as business (Longwoods, 2004).
- Of the 9 million overnight trips, 46 percent were marketable, such as touring, outdoors, beach and special events, with 44 percent to visit friends and relatives and 10 percent business (Longwoods, 2004).
- Maine’s 2003 retail sector captured \$1.9 billion, food sector \$1.7 billion, transportation \$1 billion, recreation \$800 million and accommodations \$700 million. Recreation, specifically, brought in \$532 million in 2001, \$725 million in 2002 and increased to close to \$800 million in 2003. So, from 2001 to 2002, there was a 36 percent increase with an additional increase of 7 percent in 2003. Then, if we examine the approximate \$800 million tourism expenditures in recreation, we see that day-trippers predominate with \$600 million expenditures and only \$200 million from overnight stays. More than half of the total \$800 million is spent by out-of-staters at \$455 million with slightly more as day trips vs. overnight stays (Longwoods 2004).
- The most popular experiences on Maine overnight trips were visiting small towns (65 percent), visiting the beach/ocean (55 percent), eating a lobster (36 percent), visiting

wilderness areas (38 percent), visiting lakes and rivers (42 percent), driving on scenic byways (37 percent) and doing souvenir shopping (32 percent). The most frequent regions visited in 2003 on overnight trips were the Southern Maine coast (25 percent), Downeast Acadia (19 percent), Maine lakes and mountains (15 percent) and the Greater Portland area (12 percent) (Longwoods, 2004).

- Maine travel is adversely affected by a heavy dependence on automobile travel (92 percent of tourists compared to 78 percent nationally) (TIA, 2002).

Crowding. Coastal corridor from Kittery to Mount Desert suffers severe summer congestion, hosting more than 20 million tourists from July through September (Vail, 2003).

- Three-fourths of all tourists visit the coast and close to 50 percent come in July-September (Maine Office of Tourism, 2002).

Wages. Tourism generates \$2.6 billion in Maine wages (Longwoods, 2003). If overnight visitors increased their trips by one night and their trip expenditures by \$50, a \$447 million in additional wages could be realized and that figure is more than three times as large as the total wages in 2002 from agriculture, forestry and fishing combined (University of Maine Tourism Center Committee, 2004).

- About 75 percent of tourism employees are hourly wage earners and just 25 percent of those attained the Maine Economic Growth Council's livable wage standard (then roughly \$10 per hour in 2000) or received employer-supported health benefits. Statewide, about 67 percent of jobs pay a livable wage (Vail & Kavanaugh, 2000).
- The June 2003 "Labor Market Digest" shows full-time workers in "leisure and hospitality services" with average earnings of \$13,320 in 2002, or less than half of Maine's average private sector earnings at \$29,239 (Maine Department Of Labor, 2003).

Complex pay discussions result from the fact that most Maine tourism enterprises are small with a sole proprietor not showing income in tourism pay data. Matt Polstein, who owns the New England Outdoor Center in Millinocket, argues that tourism is not necessarily a low-paying profession but that a

proprietor's income can appear hidden because a sector of earning is lost. "Income doesn't show as a paycheck," he said. "... The owners, who are the sole proprietors, might make \$100,000, but it does not show up on the state form because they are not getting a check that shows up as a standard paycheck." Although tourism might not compete with manufacturing for payroll, it doesn't pass as poorly as many think. Stakeholders see the value of tourism jobs, even if some are lower pay, because they add to Maine's overall economy. "We are shifting from a forest economy to tourism and going from skilled high-paid jobs to low-paying non-skilled jobs," said Thomas Urquhart, partner in Urquhart & Spritz consulting firm in Portland, "but a low-paying job is helping a kid pay his way through college, so thank heaven for that job."

Leakages. Just eleven cents of the tourist dollar are spent on recreational activities per se. Nonetheless, it is clear from surveys that without our natural attractions, we would lose much of the remaining 89 cents that tourists spend on eating, sleeping, shopping and transportation (Vail, 2003).

- Nearly sixty cents of every dollar tourists spent leaks out of Maine's economy when businesses purchased inputs produced out-of-state, ranging from recreational vehicles and watercraft to fuel, food, building materials, consulting services and insurance (Maine State Travel Commission, 1986). The \$6 billion tourists spend in Maine this year, therefore, will generate only roughly \$2.5 billion in direct income (Vail, Lapping, Richard & Cote, 1998, and Vail & Heldt, 2000).

SPECIFIC RECREATION CHOICES

A broad Maine tourism analysis examines visitor numbers and dollar amounts, as listed above, as evidence of where the industry is now. Statistics reveal the industry's weakest points while allowing for an analytical foundation in which to converse intelligently on the topic. More is known, however. The following section presents information about recreation choices from several recent studies.

Maine tourism stakeholders carefully follow the recreation trends – what activities are increasing and what are declining – and strive to offer the market the things-to-do that it wants, particularly within nature-based travel. The state's emphasis on nature-based tourism, as evidenced by recent conferences like the Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-based Industries, appears to be a good fit. Outdoor

recreation has been on the increase as a prime tourist interest here and beyond. In Maine, it accounts for 24 percent of marketable overnight trips and 21 percent of marketable day trips. To compare to national statistics, outdoor recreation only accounts for 13 percent of marketable overnight trips (Longwoods, 2003). As reference, the fastest growing U.S. recreation activities, according to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment gathered in the '90s, are: kayaking (173 percent), jet skiing (107 percent), snowmobiling (63 percent), wildlife watching (48 percent), hiking (44 percent) and biking and canoeing (43 percent each).

In Maine, two of the above categories are worth exploring. Snowmobiling has boomed with infrastructure – 13,000 miles of snowmobile trails – and has lead the Maine Snowmobile Association, in its 38th year, to host 290 clubs with approximately 13 percent out-of-state members. A tripling of non-resident snowmobile registrations was seen in the 1990s (Vail, 2002). Wildlife watching, however, is the state's biggest tourist activity (NRC, 2004) and can be a natural avenue to embrace sustainable tourism. More than half of Maine residents watch wildlife at home or away from home, giving Maine the fourth-highest ranking for resident participation in the country (USFWS, 2002 and 2002a).

Specifically, Maine wildlife watchers spent \$346 million, compared to \$251 million by anglers and \$162 million by hunters in 2001. Wildlife watchers spent \$445 per trip in 2001 (USFWS, 2002). Maine, in 2001, counted 419,000 wildlife tourists, defined as those who traveled more than a mile from home to observe, feed or photograph wildlife. More than half of those wildlife tourists were out-of-state visitors. The state has tried to invest in wildlife watching educational materials through several options. Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W) produced the "On Wings, On Water, In the Woods" guide in 1994. L.L. Bean and IF&W used the federal Partnership for Wildlife program in 1995 to produce 15 fiberglass full-color signs along the coast. More recently, in 2001, IF&W and the Office of Tourism printed a wildlife-watching brochure (Natural Resources Committee's Watchable Wildlife Subcommittee, 2004).

The state's tourism leaders have tried to sense how new recreation options mesh with traditional recreation choices. Traditional recreation, typically defined as hunting and fishing, is on the decline. From 1991 to 2001, participation in Maine fishing, hunting and wildlife watching dropped 22 percent, from 1.22 million to 960,000 per year, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS, 2002). Despite this drop, sporting camp owners, guides and fishermen work to keep their businesses going (Teisl & Boyle,

1998). Room for expansion exists, especially, within ocean fishing. The state has 350,000 salt-water anglers, half of whom are non-residents (Vail, 2003).

Care needs to be taken to mesh traditional – often thought of as motorized recreation – with newer recreation forms – often thought of as non-motorized. Tension exists amongst recreation niches attempting to recreate on the same piece of land. “The state is unwilling to separate user groups because then you’d get an income from both,” said Garrett Conover, owner of North Woods Ways guiding business in Willimantic, sarcastically referring to motorized and non-motorized. “By favoring one, you don’t get an income from both.” Additional stakeholder comments capture the need to think of tourism options differently today than we did 10 or 50 or 100 years ago and build upon where the current market is going.

Overall, the industry acknowledges a fast-changing market in recreation choices. What activities the public bought yesterday might not be the same today. The change is due to consumers preferring low-impact opportunities but also due to a manipulated landscape that can no longer offer the same opportunities, such as hunting due to overhunting. Multi-use landscapes lead to noise and traffic some recreationists will not tolerate.

ACADEMIC LITERATURE SURVEY

Thorough handbooks on different tourism development processes are available from the Travel Industry Association of America, World Tourism Organization, Canadian Parks Council, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Tourism Center at the University of Minnesota and the Northern Forest Lands Council (Northern Forest Lands Council, 1994, and Harper, Faulk and Rankin, 1990). Case studies by these organizations and in the academic literature offer information on successful locations. This section will define tourism’s terms as well as relevant concepts. It’s essential that the reader grasp the issues of sustainability because this analysis investigates whether tourism in Maine will be sustainable.

Academics have spent time unraveling the contradictory sound, if taken literally, of sustainable development. “The suggestion is one of conflict between ‘sustainable,’ implying a state which can be maintained, is ongoing, perhaps even unchanging and ‘development,’ which implies change.” (Pigram, 2000). Cited in many tourism studies is “Our Common Future,” also known as the Brundtland report (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The report, which focused on development,

outlined sustainability principles that can apply to a variety of fields. Sustainable development, it said, is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Scholars agree that sustainability is not about maintenance of the status quo. Sustainable tourism’s goals reach beyond existing tourism structures as planning must be done from the community level with consultation from tourism professionals in government and in private organizations (McCool & Moisey, 2001, and McCool, 2004). When grass-roots planning has been achieved, a sustainable tourism path can add then to economic development (Wall, 1997). Sustainable tourism will prevent Maine’s rustic image from becoming permanently damaged, thereby, making it like any other state with excessive development of the mundane like casinos. In the process, sustainability will be mutually beneficial for the tourism enterprise and the tourist. “Overall, environmental excellence, fostered by enlightened management practices marked by new, cleaner, technologies and an emphasis on resource conservation, recycling and reuse, presents a cleaner, greener image, to a more discerning market, with clear potential for enhanced economic viability” (Pigram, 2000).

Tourism’s Terms. Because tourism’s growing green market desires to contribute to a more sensitive approach to numerous activities, anything eco-oriented sells. One might wonder what the motivation has been for the various terms that are often used interchangeably. A proliferation of buzz words has come about through advertisements. “The problem has been that consumers did not know what they were getting, nor its impact on the environment, and did not know how the product differed from others, if, indeed, there was any difference” (Wight, 1995). Great detail could be given concerning definitions of nature-based tourism, ecotourism and, especially, sustainable tourism that are documented in the literature with somewhat confusing results. Academics argue that definitions are needed to separate one tourism type from another, even if both are environmentally friendly, thereby permitting the significance of the sector to be assessed in terms of positive and negative cultural, environmental and economic impacts (Blamey, 1997). The definitions below of nature-based tourism, ecotourism and sustainable tourism can serve as a loose foundation for a Maine tourism analysis. This study’s stakeholders, however, do not find it important to differentiate the terms, using them interchangeably. Nonetheless, each idea has valuable principles Maine can embrace.

Definition: Ecotourism. It's only proper to begin the analysis with the term ecotourism due to its clear predominance in the academic literature around the world. Canadian, Australian and African studies amongst others incorporate this term and its emphasis on low-impact nature experiences.

The earliest reference to eco-tourism in the academic literature dates back to the mid-80s: Traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals as well as any existing cultural manifestations both past and present found in these areas (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1987).

The most broadly used definition is that designed by The Ecotourism Society: Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of the local people (Western, 1993).

Ecotourism's goals, from SUNY's Chad P. Dawson's Tourism Opportunity Spectrum, include: benefiting local communities without overwhelming; protecting the environment and natural and cultural resources; requiring ethical behavior of tourists and tourism businesses; helping identify consequences of development through planning; and paying for nature preservation. Ecotourism indicators include: participatory experiences; no resource degradation; education of all parties before, during and after travel; intrinsic value of the resource; limits of the resource; partnerships; moral and ethical responsibilities toward the environment; and long-term benefits to the resource, local community and industry (Dawson, 2001).

Definition: Nature-based tourism. Nature-based tourism is often defined primarily by what it's not rather than what it is. It is a marketing tool that does not have to promote environmental conservation, international understanding and cooperation, political and economic empowerment of local populations, cultural preservation and minimal development (Ziffer, 1989).

Nature-based tourism's components, however, can be analyzed: involves conservation but not necessarily protection; shares history but not necessarily of indigenous people; can be a background for consumptive or non-consumptive recreational experiences; wants health of the local economy but not necessarily a concern for economic health of the local residents; and uses economic benefits to fund specific recreation lands but not necessarily community development (Ziffer, 1989).

This thesis only provides one nature-based tourism definition because it is difficult to find the term in the academic literature. When the word ecotourism was developed 20 years ago, academics were

attracted to it. Prior to two decades ago, the tourism industry hadn't developed the consciousness to protect the environment, therefore, not needing specialized terms.

Definition: Sustainable Tourism. Sustainable tourism has been loosely defined as tourism that is able to maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time. An alternative definition, Butler developed, accounts for the possibility of changing conditions and costs. "Tourism which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well-being of other activities and processes" (Butler, 1993). The University of Montana-Missoula's Stephen McCool defines sustainable tourism graphically, as human activity that is located at the intersection of what is ecologically appropriate, socially acceptable and economically viable. He proposes two basic tenants of sustainable tourism, even if there is question regarding the depth of the agreement: concern about ecological impacts of human activity and concern about the future (McCool, 2004). His four sustainable tourism indicators are: biophysical and social impacts; employment contribution; quality of life with the opportunity for an authentic life; and access to public decisions with input by the public (McCool personal interview, 2004). Sustainable tourism can have great social value by organizing discourse around issues, motivating civic engagement and encouraging collective action (McCool, 2004).

In many cases, academics have avoided defining this broadly thought of term but rather offered themes in which to categorize it. Academics lay out principles that can clearly raise Maine's nature-based tourism market to a lasting sustainable tourism market. Themes of sustainable tourism, from a variety of authors, include:

- Growth in the tourism industry should mean better care of the natural resources (Wall, 1993).
- The natural resource industries – tourism, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture – can support the same goals and support a community better than any one can alone (Theophile, 1995, and Webster & Chappelle, 2001).
- Various tourism organizations, including at a state level, must collaborate effectively (Boyd & Butler, 1996).

- Visitors need access to public and private lands, including easements, to recreate (Lewis, 2001).
- State-level tourism offices need a wider focus than marketing (Hunt, 1990).
- The tourism industry needs better data to illuminate strengths and weaknesses (Propst, Wellman, Campa & McDonough, 2000).
- The addition of tourism within a depressed community can translate into long-term community economic development (Gartner, 2002).
- A locale must honestly promote its tourism reality, from infrastructure to interpretation (Pleumarom, 1994).
- Identification of sustainable guidelines for recreational opportunities can protect and capitalize on unique natural attributes of the ecosystem (Butler, 1993).
- Guidelines, or measurements, indicate if or when an area exceeds carrying capacity so that it can reduce environmental effects (Hawkes & Williams, 1993).
- Sustainable tourism does more than preserve the status quo by incorporating stakeholders in decision-making planning (Nelson, 1993).
- Worldviews affect a business owner's willingness to accept and integrate concepts of sustainability (Swarbooke, 1999).
- Sustainable tourism is meant to counteract the negatives of tourism through a separate, more positive role (Pleumarom, 1994).
- Planning is done from the community level with consultation from tourism professionals. Limits of Acceptable Change is a useful framework for regional tourism planning (McCool & Lime, 2001).

Relevant Concepts Review. When a researcher moves beyond the search for definitions, the standard tourism question posed assesses resident attitudes toward the industry, especially within the context of economic opportunities. In other words, how do communities feel about embracing tourism as a viable industry and, therefore, build infrastructure and set aside and manage land to support it? The

favorability of attitudes toward tourism typically increases with the individual's economic dependence on tourism. Those who benefit from tourism perceive fewer social and environmental impacts and have more favorable attitudes toward additional development.

Because perceived economic benefits of development generally appear high, many communities have moved toward tourism but recognize comprehensive tourism planning, including public participation, as crucial. A study of 28 rural Colorado communities analyzed the perceived impacts of tourism and assessed the threshold level of development beyond which attitudes become less favorable. (Long, Perdue & Allen, 1990). The *Journal of Travel Research* article, titled "Rural Resident Tourism Perceptions and Attitudes by Community Level of Tourism," focused on tourism under three headings: the perceived impacts of existing tourism, the desirability of additional tourism development and the appropriateness of special tourism user fees and taxes. The authors hypothesized that there is a level of use or carrying capacity beyond which the impacts become unacceptable to the visitor, the management agency and the community. The study found Colorado community residents are sensitive not only to the economic contributions of tourism but also to the social and environmental impacts. In many ways, this conclusion mirrors Butler's tourism life cycle stages, which can rise and then fall to a declining level financially and socially that is found unacceptable to visitors, government and communities (Butler, 1980). To relate these concepts to Maine, each of the state's communities must assess its attitudes to take on tourism and craft a plan and environment to support it. If thorough plans with input evolve, results might remain acceptable.

The literature goes on to emphasize that tourism's value can be measured more precisely in ways other than dollars and cents, particularly through the study of ecological economics. This measures the relationship between ecosystems and economic systems – in its approach to resource use assessment. Ecological economics can be used to define sustainable tourism development in a *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* article (Drimi & Common, 1996). Intergenerational and intragenerational equity (in which educational, recreational and environmental activities available to present generations would not diminish for future generations) and ecosystem integrity can be used to reject substitution of species diversity or other ecosystem elements, particularly in protected areas such as conserved lands.

Maine tourism stakeholders see the need through ecological economics for the state and its private conservation organizations to have a management plan to care for the natural capital. Also, through

ecological economics, communities in Maine can begin to inventory and measure the economic potential of natural areas rather than think strictly in favor of the mass-tourism built model imposed upon natural landscapes. Benefits in the tourism industry might be non-monetary both for tourists who experience a priceless mountain top view and tourism providers who enjoy a high quality of life within the community. Maine should explore how to measure non-monetary benefits to account for the potential financial impact of conserved lands, such as through the Contingent Valuation Method's willingness to pay formula that will be described in more detail later in this section. Through these methods, Maine communities can look at elements on their community inventory as assets – even indirect economic assets. A covered bridge captures an element of the town's cultural history that may not generate money on its own but does so indirectly by drawing tourists to the area who eat at the local diner across the street.

At issue, in plain economic terms – not ecological economics – is the possibility for substitution between natural and man-made capital. Typically, economists allow for such substitution so that the size of the total man-made and natural capital stock is constant or increasing. Man-made projects, such as Disneyland-type developments, definitely provide economic benefits, but these developments are not socially acceptable to the general public as substitutions in protected natural areas. The answer is to measure a non-declining stream of net economic benefits rather than gross benefits. This means the economic result will take into account the investment of management to maintain natural capital, including avoiding and repairing environmental damage. The relevant benefit stream is that arising after such costs have been met (Drimi & Common, 1996). Investment in management to repair damage is necessary for sustainable use where tourism can cause impacts. In addition, academics note that tourism provides many non-monetary benefits not calculated in the total tourist expenditure dollar figure. This number is an incomplete measure of the satisfaction that tourists derive from their experiences. Methods for measuring non-marketed environmental benefits are needed (Drimi & Common, 1996).

Finally, a good portion of the tourism literature studies the economic potential of protected lands. The need for protected lands in which to recreate cannot be underestimated, here or around the world. Because Maine is made up only of 6.75 percent public land, it is harder to apply the literature's conclusions; however, they are necessary to study to determine if increasing protected lands would be of benefit. Even with a tradition of public recreation on private land, Mainers still need public land options as

part of a sustainable tourism approach because public lands have the potential to bring in billions of industry dollars. Protected area tourism in the United States and Canada had an economic impact of between \$236 billion and \$370 billion in 1996 (Phillips, ed., McCool, Eagles & Haynes, 2002). Typically, this type of economic detail is not available to prove why public lands need to be cared for and added to as a tourism opportunity. Due to a scarcity of statistics, “Societies and governments tend to undervalue the benefits derived and therefore do not provide the funds needed to maximize the flow of benefits,” as written in the World Commission on Protected Areas’ Best Practice Guidelines series (Phillips et al., 2002). The total economic value of a protected area is the sum of the use values and the non-use values. Use values may be direct (considered to be market values) or indirect (non-market values). All non-use values are non-market values, or also called indirect, and often are defined as option, existence or bequest. Use and non-use values go hand in hand. Park tourism, for example, is thought of as a direct use value, but after people visit a park, they might donate money to the park, argue for its existence or request that it be protected for future generations, which are all non-use values (Phillips et al., 2002).

To measure the economic impact of protected areas, which would include Land for Maine’s Future areas, many economic impact assessments are available. First, define how to measure the impacts: gross domestic product, labor income or the number of jobs created by a park. Economic benefits are more than financial, but market and non-market values are typically reported in dollar figures. So, how does the industry account for non-market benefits in dollar figures? For protected land areas, there are two techniques – the Travel Cost Method (TCM) and the Contingent Valuation Method (CVM). TCM is measured by the amount of money people pay to travel to a protected area and assumes that cost of travel affects frequency of visitation. CVM allows consumers to assign a value to recreation experiences and establish a theoretical price through “willingness to pay” (Phillips et al., 2002). The Canadian Parks Council developed a framework for measuring the economic value of protected areas in 1998. It examines benefits, both market and non-market, in three categories: personal benefits like those that accrue to stakeholders; business benefits like a redistribution of commerce; and societal benefits like those from biodiversity and educational benefits. The council developed three separate booklets with sample surveys so resource managers can easily calculate a dollar figure for each of the categories (Canadian Parks Council, 2000).

Literature Conclusions. The literature review's general sustainability themes and emphasis on measuring tourism's success through resident attitudes, ecological health and revenues fit with the broad Blaine House Conference proposals. Can education, government, planning and branding be part of tourism's success, bringing a higher quality of life and quality tourism experience to visitors? This chapter examines the literature to see how tourism stakeholder dialogue has been gathered and what implication that process had on influencing the direction of the industry. Broad stakeholder dialogue, however, has not been researched before, especially in the United States. Specific studies of small locales in Cuba, Africa and the Pacific islands have been done, but these foreign results, often from Third World locations, are difficult to apply to Maine. The next chapter examines the four Blaine House research questions and details Maine's cumbersome tourism industry structure that discourages networking, allowing for duplication of efforts and conflicting initiatives that tear down the industry rather than build it up.

CHAPTER 3: THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

RANGE OF POSSIBLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The state's tourism-related entities seek answers that acknowledge the importance of Maine's natural resources as the foundation for much of Maine's existing and future tourism industry and as a legacy to be protected for future generations. People in and outside the industry know enough to perceive that the existing projectory is not the desired one, seeking to adjust their path so that what is chosen consciously now will provide desired future choices. Until the stakeholders can verbalize what they do not know, steps to move the industry ahead, especially toward a more-thoughtful sustainability, will not be taken.

Ironically, what is known is the fear that exists of the unknown. Residents fear tourists who descend on their communities in a way that does not respect values, leading to a destruction of sense of place. Some businesses fear the idea of sustainable tourism, believing they'll face restrictions or more costly operations. Sustainability is not an argument against change or for radical conservatism but a focus on the process and getting it right as each level of development leads to the next (Pigram, 2000). A healthy tourism responds to a community's needs. Sustainable tourism will question how businesses affect the community, how businesses can contribute to the community, how businesses can sustain themselves economically and how they can provide an enhanced educational tourist experience. Regional officials, through sustainable tourism, can put themselves on a new projectory. Western Maine, specifically, can respond through high-quality primitive recreation that will benefit the region's economy.

For such an encompassing analysis as this study, it's important to list some basic questions pondered by the NRC members during its year-long study. Any of these questions could become an entire thesis even though they are partially answered here. Some of the unanswered questions at the 40,000-foot view include:

- Should the industry worry about defining nature-based tourism vs. ecotourism vs. sustainable tourism? And, do clear definitions of each even exist? Brief answer: Each term is defined in detail in the literature review. Sustainable tourism's definition often remains vague, in which everyone agrees that it is a goal until it's time for implementation when conflict arises over

the operational details (McCool, 2004). During this study's interviewing process, each stakeholder was asked his or her definition of sustainability in order to make a comparison. Answers were all over the board, from a marketing to an infrastructure emphasis. One defined it as the same number of visitors coming back to the same place year after year. Another said it's minimal impact so no one else would know you'd been there. A third said is it a level of tourism that does not destroy the natural resource sites or the experience.

- Is it helpful to classify niche sectors to document their strengths and weaknesses? Brief answer: Niche sectors include hard adventure, soft adventure, hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, ecotourism, agritourism and cultural tourism. Beware that tourists as well as tourist businesses can duplicate an activity in more than one outdoor recreation category, for example, counting an event as soft adventure and agritourism at the same time. A windjammer ride could be both cultural and hard adventure tourism depending on the trip specifics. An entire trip, made up possibly of diverse activities, can involve soft adventure, cultural and ecotourism. Visitors, who consider themselves ecotourists, come even with different expectations. One person donates \$100 to Audubon's Project Puffin and expects to work on a remote island banding chicks while someone else donates \$1,500 and expects to live on the island and be pampered with ranger-type interpretive sessions.
- How does the Maine tourism industry balance short-term needs with long-term goals? Brief answer: The hope would be that a long-term mode could allow the state to have short-term profit without raping the resource and ignoring the future. Just like the forest model, a tree can't be grown overnight, and neither can the tourism industry. It will be important that actions taken by one party not negatively affect another, causing no real progress. Sustainability efforts taken by one area could result in pollution, resource extraction and consumption being shifted. "When a community adopts strict population growth-management policies, the community may effectively deal with the issues within its boundaries, but growth problems may be pushed elsewhere" (McCool, 2004).

- How does Maine increase support to an industry that's made up of so many small businesses with little centralized energy? Brief answer: At this point, the "how" is not easy to conclude. The industry is still at the point of documenting how many small businesses exist throughout the state. An analysis of Piscataquis County counts the number of small tourism-related businesses with 43 percent of the businesses in this inland county qualifying: gift shops (8.2 percent), crafters (7.9 percent), art (6.5 percent), guides (6.2 percent), lodging (5.9 percent), convenience stores (4.7 percent), restaurants (2.1 percent) and antiques (1.5 percent). Plus, many of these businesses have four or fewer employees (Merchant, 2003).

Overall, the above questions ask if sustainable tourism is a possibility for Maine. The state government is trying to address this query through goals connected to the Nov. 17, 2003 conference in Augusta. The four tourism proposals from the Blaine House Conference on Natural-Resource Industries, attended by 700 stakeholders across five natural resource industries, were:

1. Make higher education, research and extension support priorities
2. Clarify state agency roles and responsibilities
3. Implement sustainable tourism economic development planning
4. Create a comprehensive branding campaign

Implementing the four Blaine House Conference recommendations, stakeholders said, is key to improving the tourism landscape. "If you take a look at the Blaine House Conference recommendations and implement those, then you'll get a lot of these things taken care of," said Nathaniel Bowditch, the assistant director of the Office of Tourism. He praised the efforts of the Blaine House Steering Committee, a liaison's group of state agencies involved in the conference, as well as the NRC and the MTC for crafting clear proposals. Conference proposals can serve as guidelines because each fits sustainability principles.

RESEARCH SETTING AND INDUSTRY TIMELINE

The Maine tourism research setting will be described in this section in order to document who the players are in the complex industry landscape. The setting includes state government agencies, the state legislature and private tourism organizations that have taken recent initiatives to change the direction of the industry onto a more efficient, unified and sustainable path. It's essential that the reader grasp the structure

of the Maine tourism industry because this analysis investigates, in part, whether tourism in Maine can be restructured. Stakeholders, in terms of this study, are a broad group who work directly in tourism or who are indirectly affected by tourism, whether positively or negatively. As defined by the Office of Tourism, a stakeholder could be a river rafting business owner, a head of a non-profit land conservation organization or a forest landowner. The following background examines the setting in which stakeholders operate in order to provide the reader a basis of understanding of the industry.

Formal Entities and Initiatives. Tourism in Maine has operated for decades with a top-down approach. Tourism bodies below are part of the rich setting in which to do research:

- **Maine Office of Tourism:** The office implements an overall marketing program for the State of Maine, including advertising, public relations, and research and analysis. Housed in the Department of Economic and Community Development in Augusta, it produced a Strategic Five-Year Plan in 2002.
- **Maine Tourism Commission (MTC):** A gubernatorial-appointed body of 24 private industry individuals that advises the office on policy and programs and has a standing committee on the natural resources.
- **Natural Resources Committee (NRC):** An MTC committee lead by Jeff Rowe and Donna Fichtner, the NRC researches issues relating to the relationship between the tourism industry and the use and protection of Maine’s natural resources. The NRC released a report simply titled “Report by Department of Economic and Community Development’s Office of Tourism and the Maine Tourism Commission Natural Resources Committee to the Legislature’s Business, Research and Economic Development Committee Concerning Nature-based Tourism” in May 2004.
- **Maine Tourism Association:** Contracted by the Office of Tourism to operate visitor centers and educate legislators and the public on economic development needs.

- **Maine Tourism Alliance:** Made up of the Maine Tourism Association with five key industry segments: the Maine Campground Owners Association, the Maine Innkeepers Association, the Maine Restaurant Association, the Maine Merchant Association and Ski Maine.
- **State Legislators:** One legislator, Rep. Sean Faircloth (D-Bangor), submitted an ecotourism bill, Legislative Document 946, “Resolve, To Establish the Commission to Promote Jobs and Economic Development through Ecotourism,” to the legislature in February 2003.
- **Blaine House Steering Committee:** In preparation of the November 2003 Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-Based Industries, a 22-member committee was created, and continues to date to advise the governor on the progress of implementing recommendations. Sitting on the committee are entrepreneurs, scholars, agency commissioners and a governor’s office representative. Through this group, Gov. John Baldacci hired Fermata, Inc., a Vermont-based consulting firm, in 2004 to make sustainable tourism recommendations, including three regional pilot projects, released in 2005.
- **Legislature’s Business, Research and Economic Development Committee (BRED):** A legislative joint standing committee that hears the majority of tourism-related policy bills, including LD 946.

Multiple Maine entities work on tourism goals at the same time, often duplicating efforts and unknowingly doing so. This happened, in this ecotourism case, between the layers of government. Through the LD 946 hearings before the BRED committee to assess the bill’s validity to move forward, it became evident that the legislature had not been aware of what the Maine Office of Tourism was doing and vice versa. During that hearing, the Maine Office of Tourism indicated the mission of the newly formed MTC’s NRC included objectives outlined in LD 946. Although LD 946 did not pass, its legislative process added to the state’s ecotourism future. Credit should go to Faircloth’s 2003 bill to put tourism’s issues on the open floor. Goals mentioned in the ecotourism bill included:

- Identify landscapes and locations that are recognized for their nature-based tourism values and that are at risk due to over-use, poorly planned development, or other factors.
- Identify locations within the state that hold potential for significant nature-based tourism value.

- Recommend marketing and promotion strategies, including marketing collateral and event development, that effectively incorporate nature-based tourism and reflect the available resources, resulting in the best return on investment.
- Propose infrastructure improvements designed to enhance rather than harm recognized resources. Such improvements might include, but not be limited to: wetland boardwalks, bird blinds, highway signs, wildlife and birding festivals.

The NRC took on the task to analyze the content proposed in the bill and was asked to report back to the BRED committee in one year with “recommendations for action regarding nature-based tourism in the state.” During this year, the NRC expanded its membership to include close to 30 members representing public and private sectors. NRC members represent landowners, professional guides, sportsmen, economic development groups, arts and heritage groups, regional tourism groups and camping organizations. Also included are representatives of IF&W, DOC, the Department of Agriculture and the State Planning Office (SPO). Finally, represented on the committee are interests including, but not limited to, Maine Audubon, the Natural Resources Council of Maine, the University of Maine, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Transportation. The NRC’s work included one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders, regional focus groups and a tourism reference database to serve as a library. The 43 interviews gathered for this study were used as background for the writing of the 2004 legislative report to the BRED committee.

Much of the report’s focus encompassed analyzing tourism terms – like nature-based, eco and sustainable – and niche markets like wildlife watching, soft adventure, hard adventure and cultural tourism. The report discussed the creation of the Wildlife Watching Subcommittee to demonstrate its concern to study niche recreation options. Overall, the report concluded much work was yet to be done: “The NRC has discovered that the task of providing recommendations for action regarding nature-based tourism in the state is vastly complex and involved. Solid groundwork has been laid for policy development, program restructuring and public understanding. The NRC has accomplished what it feels to be about *a quarter of its task* in meeting the full objective of the Business, Research and Economic Development committee’s

mandate and is committed to continuing its work to see the objectives through and address future opportunities.”

The NRC, in the report, documented its contributions to the Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-based Industries during its year to research and write the legislative document. Its significant work contributed greatly to the conference, in particular to formulating the tourism white paper authored by Bowdoin College academic David Vail, who is also a member of the NRC. The Nov. 17, 2003, Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-Based Industries convened with approximately 700 participants and offered a set of four tourism industry proposals. Each of the four proposals was developed with multiple recommendations. The NRC and Blaine House Conference reports have become policy-making tools for agencies and industries to set a higher bar by clarifying the issues.

Other Entities Crucial to Tourism. This section will examine the research setting beyond the primary government entities to name related state government agencies and private tourism organizations. This documentation is crucial to show the daily atmosphere in which the tourism entrepreneur operates. The good news is that the news isn't all bad because partnerships have occurred to allow two players to accomplish more than any one can on its own. Regions as well as individuals have partnered – sometimes with success and sometimes not – to enhance tourism's future. Interaction helps both express and get what they want. Alliances can make sure all parties are on the same page, avoiding conflict due to a lack of communication. A shining partnership example of regional tourism planning has come from DESTINY 2010 – Down East Sustainable Tourism Initiative Year 2010 – made up of Hancock and Washington county officials. Its 2004 report builds on dialogue that has been going on since an earlier draft in 2000. The current plan offers a road map for tourism objectives in the next five years. Increasing tourism in Washington County by 20 percent, the 34-page report said, would generate \$5 million annually for the local economy. The report's organizers – the Vacationland Resources Committee of the Down East Resource Conservation and Development Council – said the DESTINY program's five-year history presents an asset for learning now and into the future.

Alliances lift the industry's platform to a higher-operating level. Other successful Maine partnerships include:

- The Island Explorer bus was initiated by Friends of Acadia working with Acadia National Park, the Maine Department of Transportation, L.L. Bean and Bar Harbor and surrounding communities to transport Mount Desert Island tourists with carefree public transportation on congested roads (Daigle & Zimmerman, 2004).
- The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund's lottery ticket, on sale in January 1996, was created through a special legislative body including the commissioners of DOC and IF&W as well as the Sportman's Alliance of Maine (SAM) and Maine Audubon Society to gather funds to conserve Maine's outdoor heritage and natural resource and recreational benefits. Proceeds, specifically \$10 million in grants to 385 projects, have gone toward four distribution categories: Fisheries and wildlife and habitat conservation (35 percent), acquisition and management of public land, public access and outdoor recreation sites and facilities (35 percent), endangered and threatened species (15 percent) and natural resources law enforcement and protection of public health (15 percent).
- Land trusts are nonprofit organizations that, as all or part of their mission, work to conserve land by undertaking or assisting in land or easement acquisition or by stewardship of such land or easements. Maine, California and Colorado have led the nation in the amount of acreage protected by local and regional land trusts, according to the Land Trust Alliance. Maine has 86 land trusts protecting more than 1.3 million acres.

(http://www.lta.org/census/census_tables.htm). Land trusts make acquisition decisions based on the sentiment of the community involved as relationships evolve. The Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) in Brunswick often seeks to mesh with community desires and requests. "Many times we do things because the community asks us to do things," said Jane Arbuckle, director of stewardship at MCHT. "Frenchboro asked us to come and buy up part of the island because it was concerned that it would be bought up by wealthy people. This is probably the idea. Local land trusts are great because ideally they are the community."

- The Maine Island Trail, overseen by both public and private groups, is a 350-mile waterway extending from Cape Porpoise Harbor on the west, to Machias Bay on the east and including 150 islands and mainland sites for day visits or overnight camping. A non-profit, the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA), and DOC's Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) created the island trail management plan for 45 public islands on the 80-island trail. BPL provides money to MITA to manage the public lands on the trail. Neither group could have accomplished the comprehensive management strategy on its own. From a financial standpoint, the partnership has alleviated insufficient management dollars by wisely using available resources to better shared interests. Trail users include outfitters, schooner boat operators, the state and non-profits who have had input on trail guidelines.
- The North Maine Woods Inc., a non-profit organization that has overseen recreation for decades on millions of acres of private forestlands, plays a role on a regional board to monitor area tourism plans. Networking allows one group to monitor the accuracy of another group. "Our bylaws say we can't promote to bring more people to the land, but some state agency had been promoting rafting on the Allagash, which is not even allowed," said Albro Cowperthwaite, executive director of the Ashland-based non-profit.
- The Sportsman/Forest Landowners Alliance, organized initially by SAM, brings parties together and gathers annually at a sporting camp to discuss issues. "Landowners need to take a bigger role in getting information to the public. I think we've been poor at doing this. Forest management, wildlife management and recreation uses can interact and are compatible," said Sarah Medina, the land use director for Seven Islands Land Company based in Bangor.
- The Maine Mountain Heritage Area (<http://www.mainemountains.org>) is a regional effort to support development through heritage-based initiatives in inland Maine. The organization has a marketing plan and event-based committees planning historical walks and a travelling exhibit with text regarding the history of the region's towns to be narrated electronically. The group is seeking a national designation. (Maine Mountain Heritage Network, 2003).

Stakeholders Join Together for Tourism: With a desire to offer high-quality tourism that protects the natural resources, Mainers need to be positive about tourism's potential. "We need to realize that manufacturing is leaving the state and probably won't be back, so we need to get serious about providing tourism and recreation to people," said Steve Wight, owner of Sunday River Inn in Newry. Stakeholders want the state of Maine to realize that nature-based tourism is economically significant. "I'd love to say in 10 years that birders bring in \$X dollars a year," said Judy Walker, Maine Audubon staff naturalist at Gilsland Farm in Falmouth. "I don't think the rest of the world will buy into eco-tourism in Maine until we do." Part of a reason to back tourism is that non-tourism businesses profit from tourists, too. The tourism industry, however, has done a poor job of labeling itself as a Maine attribute. The general thinking is that the roads are busier, and tourists make taxes go up. "In a mill town, you're taught that tourists are bad and to make them go away because they will make us legally change with new regulations," said Matt Polstein, owner of the New England Outdoor Center in Millinocket. "The idea has been that if a tourist drives to Kittery and throws open his wallet, then that is the best tourist." Consequently, the tourism industry is not treated well by the public as a valid Maine industry. The solution to repairing the perception problem could come, in part, from the state, which should recognize tourism for its economic value and counter the negative stereotype. "The state might do more work in kind of dispelling that reputation that it is just minimum-wage jobs," Tilton said. All levels of government need to take part in enhancing nature-based tourism's perception. "We need the whole legislation at the municipal, county and state level to focus on conservation recreation," said Ken Olson, president of Friends of Acadia in Bar Harbor. "This will give the public the sense of why it's important." Stakeholders clearly believe more needs to be done to support tourism's potential.

Tourism's success might come down to tourism businesses acting in a stewardship mode by incorporating eco-friendly development. Ecologically improving the landscape is the goal of resource agencies but should also fall under tourism's goals. "Stewarding the extent, character and diversity of the natural resources that support the state's economy – particularly tourism – can't just be the job of land trusts, resource agencies and conservation groups," said Lee Sochasky, executive director of the St. Croix International Waterway Commission in Calais. "There must be a stronger partnership between these and tourism operators – with the latter encouraged to take an active role. We need to make this 'the right thing

to do.” The tourism industry’s core will be stronger when stewardship becomes a mutual goal of tourism and natural resource stakeholders.

Stakeholders Face Those Against Tourism: Although Maine’s No. 1 industry is tourism, not every place in Maine wants to be part of that industry. Skeptical residents not directly involved in the tourism landscape ask whether it has any importance or value in their lives. Sustainable tourism seeks buy-in from communities, and if that factor is not present, then tourism should not be a part of that community until sentiments change. Not all communities in Maine, particularly inland areas, are familiar with tourism because they have had strong ties with other natural resource industries. Today, these places are not so much against tourism as they are on the fence whether to embrace it or not.

Millinocket and Greenville are examples of towns that have questioned whether to accept tourism. Interviewees said that Millinocket residents appear to dislike Baxter State Park and many have never hiked Katahdin, which is in their back yard. “The Millinocket City Council is getting better at having a younger generation taking interest. We’re lessening the old mentality that the paper mills will take care of us and to get tourists in and out and empty their pocketbooks. Tourism is influential. We will need to be other than what we have been in the past,” said a frustrated Irvin Caverly, director of Baxter State Park in Millinocket. Others agree with Caverly’s assessment of Millinocket’s tourism resistance. “Millinocket in the beginning was negative about tourism,” said Laurie Cormier, owner of Big Moose Inn, Cabins & Campground in Millinocket. “They’d ask what time the rafters are coming because they didn’t want to be here with them even though they are the ones who bought food at the grocery store and bought gas.” Greenville faces similar old-school attitudes that push away tourism’s potential. “We tried to get the town to embrace tourism for the last five years,” said Paul Fichtner, past president of the local chamber and owner of Big Lake Equipment in Greenville and Penobscot Lake Lodge in T4R5/T3R5. “Until attrition takes care of some of the old attitudes, these people are listened to. Many of these people are paper company retirees who have everything paid for. I can see why those people don’t want anything to change. Sometimes just to get in people’s faces at a meeting, I say we have turned into a retirement/tourism community. There is room for both of these people.” Making room for tourism is still a challenge for many towns.

Interestingly, some communities are so against tourism that even the word brings on bad connotations. One stakeholder suggested “tourism” not be used, especially in rural Maine, due to implied

meanings. “It is a problem for people who have to live and work in one area and then the tourist comes and leaves,” said Sheila Jans, senior fellow at the Quebec Labrador Foundation at a field desk in Madawaska. “The idea of tourism and who a tourist is can be very freaky to people up here. They don’t want them, and they equate tourists as bad like in Bar Harbor.” Residents need to see that tourists, stakeholders said, are really people just like them.

A basic question: Does rural Maine want more visitors? Landowners say no. “Landowners don’t want more public because then the pressure is on the landowners to provide the resource,” said Steve Schley, president of Pingree Associates, who spoke through his employee Sarah Medina of Seven Islands Land Co. “If we want to promote Aroostook State Park, then that’s fine. We are torn over the desire and the appropriateness of more promotion of the use of inland Maine, but there’s a lack of opportunity to profit from it, and there’s the potential to destroy characters currently attractive, including forest management.” Plus, there is a high cost to private landowners. Forestry firms, such as International Paper, pay for multi-use infrastructure. The North Maine Woods Inc. alleviates landowner infrastructure demands and invests in improvements out of its own pocket without burdening the landowners. “The North Maine Woods is a nonprofit that charges enough money to provide for the campsites,” Medina said, “which is good for us because our foresters don’t have to be out making sure that there is enough toilet paper at campsites.” Some landowners are against providing expanded tourism infrastructure to entice a mainstream tourist to visit. “It’s good that we are not providing certain things because the type of user we want coming to this area is the experienced, self-sufficient recreationist nature traveler,” she added. Inland Maine might be suffering from losses in its traditional natural resource industries, yet it does not necessarily want tourism there.

Stakeholders Push Tourism Development: A somewhat hostile climate toward tourism results in a lack of respect of the overall industry. Locals, who give little recognition to tourism efforts, need to be educated on the positives. It’s believed that most anti-tourism towns have not thought through why they are against tourism but rather express a gut reaction. “The gas station attendant who talks to out-of-staters doesn’t think the fact that the tourist comes is the reason he has a job,” Polstein said. The Maine Legislature is aware of the power of tourism to bring in state tax dollars, painting a positive image, yet the average citizen sees a different picture.

There are those, especially in inland Maine, who have pushed tourism development in their backyard. Some Greenville residents expected to shut down tourism discussions, based on overall inland tourism impressions, but the current Greenville town manager embraced tourism as part of a needed diversity to build a town's success. "I maintain that we are strongest when the most diverse," said John Simko, who reflected on the '80s calamity of the mills shutting down. "There was a lot of talk on: Do we want to see tourism as a new way to create money? The attitude didn't used to be concerned with tourists. The end product is that it isn't 'either/or' but both with an 'and.'" Greenville residents who work with Simko see the same importance of tourism investment. "I jumped in my airplane one day and saw snowmobiles all over and didn't see them coming to Greenville," Fichtner said. "We lobbied the town to get two of those grooming machines and pull a big drag on them. We convinced the town that it was important for it to have the equipment: two used groomers." Gateway communities see the financial potential of tourism today as evidenced by new nature-based activities. Millinocket has started the Wooden Canoe Festival and the End of the Trail Festival to celebrate the terminal point of the Appalachian Trail.

Finally, some communities appear negative toward tourism because they believe the stereotype that jobs consist of flipping burgers and cleaning motel rooms. Although tourism carries its share of low-end jobs, as does every industry, it brings high-quality jobs, too, measured by salary and job satisfaction. "I think when you talk about losing mill jobs to tourism jobs that the argument is that you will be at McDonald's or changing bed sheets," McEvoy said. "There is some truth to that, but ... the mill jobs are going down, and there is nothing we can do about that. We can build a tourism-based economy that is strong and has a quality of life. Not everyone will have year-round jobs with benefits, because neither do I. All my guides don't make a lot of money, but they have the quality of life that they want." It's important to recall that Maine depends on all types of tourism jobs, as the industry employs 10 percent of the job base.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To gain an understanding of Maine's nature-based tourism future, the Maine Office of Tourism and its partnering MTC's NRC sought to gather data through a qualitative inquiry of Maine's tourism stakeholders. A year-long study begun in the late spring of 2003 for the legislature. Stakeholder interviews – of private, public and non-profit entities – were gathered to document issues relating to the use and

protection of Maine's natural resources and to define areas of consensus and disagreement, including the role of state agencies and the legislature, in supporting a sustainable tourism vision. Find a list of the five interview questions (Appendix A) and a list of the interviewees (Appendix B).

Methodology. Through this qualitative inquiry, stakeholders have the opportunity to guide current and future research on Maine's natural resources as connected to the tourism industry, which is a complex economic and social issue for the state. This study takes a descriptive-interpretive approach through open-ended, semi-structured interviewees. Participants were encouraged to join the study in hope of affecting future policy decisions. Qualitative methodology provides greater believability or credibility to the findings by allowing the study participants to present their own ideas in their own words (Patton, 1990). A variety of academic fields, such as education and public administration, have turned toward qualitative studies of diverse stakeholders as a way to survey affected parties about a particular topic – especially if that topic is a contentious one. A qualitative stakeholder approach, therefore, seeks to include voices and recognize their subtleties. This study shows a range of opinions. Sustainable tourism, interestingly, strives to include rather than to exclude with input by the public (McCool, 2004).

The wide body of recreation literature also recognizes the power of qualitative inquiry for understanding the visitor experience (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2000, and Stewart & Cole, 1999). Quantitative methods are not well suited for exploring the subtleties of complex challenges and maximizing understanding (Creswell, 2003). In the mid-'90s, tourism academics developed a new vision to merge the old quantitative methods with qualitative strategies. "The infixities of culture, of identify, of meaning, and of representation (characteristic of postmodern tourism) appear ... to demand the kind of slow, exhaustive, and ultra-suspicious practices that are generally offered by the qualitative researcher" (Hollinshead, 1996). Within exploratory research, qualitative methods are more likely to identify useful information (Creswell 2003, Maxwell, 1996). The researcher taps informative individuals to allow participants to serve as the acknowledged experts, thereby, promoting understanding. Exploratory research can be seen as a prelude to a larger study (Berg, 2001). Exploratory studies are most typically done for three purposes – to satisfy the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding; to test the feasibility of undertaking a more careful study; and to develop the methods to be employed in a more careful study (Babbie, 1992).

As interviews were completed and shared with the NRC, the committee incorporated the data into its legislative report submitted to the BRED committee in May 2004. A more thorough analysis of the one-on-one interviews and regional focus groups has taken place by the NRC since the Blaine House conference. The NRC plans to continue its study to better the relationship between the tourism industry and the use and protection of Maine's natural resources. This thesis takes the NRC-gathered data and expands on it to more thoroughly identify appropriate sustainable pathways. In qualitative terms, the research uses primary data to try to deeply understand a system so that we can see ourselves better. An image is built from the interviews with intrinsic methods that allow the data to identify what points rise to the surface.

Specific methods of this research included:

- A pre-determined list of 43 names chosen by the NRC.
- Sources contacted by me.
- One-on-one interviews done in person or over the phone. All phone interviewees received the five-question survey in the mail prior to our phone interview.
- All notes taken by hand or typed directly into a computer with no tape recording device.
- Questions discussed one by one on the five-question survey; however, the semi-structured interview mode allowed for alteration when needed.
- On-the-record comments allowed participants to make more forceful statements knowing that the weight of their names would be attached.

Participant Selection. To choose interview subjects, each of the NRC members submitted the names of approximately three Maine tourism experts to interview, totalling approximately 80 names. Those names were passed on to the committee co-chairs and culled down to near 40. When choosing interview participants, the NRC intentionally sought stakeholders in and outside the industry because it felt tourism affects all people in all parts of the state. The final interview list broke down into approximately one third who work directly in the industry, a third who are not in the industry but interact with tourists frequently and a third who are related through tourism think-tank organizations, non-profits or other leadership positions. Find a list of the interviewed stakeholders attached (Appendix B). A great amount of diversity existed within the pool. Of the list of

interviewees, only one – Agricultural Council of Maine (AGCOM) – is a group rather than an individual. At an AGCOM meeting in Augusta in August 2003, the approximately 20 participants knew comments were being taken for tourism reports.

The 43 interviewees’ names can be grouped into three lists that became apparent during the study.

- **Direct Tourism (14):** These people work directly in tourism and produce a business product – even a park experience – to be purchased by tourists.
- **Indirect Tourism (12):** These people work in non-tourism businesses, such as forest landowners and economic development organizations, that consider tourism’s role even though it’s not their primary or only business mission.
- **Related Tourism (17):** These people work in government, non-profits and academic settings with part or all of their jobs focused on the tourism industry.

Direct Tourism	Indirect Tourism	Related Tourism
Theresa Hoffman	Sarah Medina	Jym St. Pierre
Natalie Springuel	Joel Swanton	Ken Spalding
Matt Polstein	Gary Donovan	Ken Olson
Kip Files	Charles Davis	Gabrielle Kissinger
Laurie Cormier	John Simko	Dave Field
Gil Gilpatrick	Gloria Varney	Bob Meyers
Irvin Caverly	Eric Hopkins	Thomas Urquhart
Steve Wight	Dianne Tilton	Sheila Jans
Paul Fichtner	Carl Little	Richard Anderson
Matt Libby	Bucky Owen	Greg Sweetser
Jeff McEvoy	Andy Kekacs	Kevin Boyle
Garrett Conover	AGCOM	Larry Warren
Albro Cowperthwaite		Rep. Sean Faircloth
Sally Littlefield		Nathaniel Bowditch
		Lee Sochasky
		Judy Walker
		Jane Arbuckle

It’s valuable to break down the names into three columns even though, in the end, consensus didn’t come as a whole from any group. I felt it would be possible that the Direct Tourism stakeholders would be concerned about the same core issues, and so on, but this was not the case.

Because the list of interviewees was chosen by the NRC, standard sampling techniques were not employed. Snowball sampling, a good choice for any situation where the study population is hard to define, did not occur except in one case where the suggested interviewee declined participation but named a

replacement (Babbie, 2001). Each interview concluded, however, with a request to ask participants to name other individuals or documents that the Office of Tourism should follow up on as the study proceeds.

Limitations of the participant list exist. While all 43 interviewees contributed strong statements concerning Maine tourism, the list emphasizes inland Maine voices despite the fact that the majority of Maine tourism happens on the coast. Interviewees' opinions slant heavily to one direction concerning several issues like single vs. multi access and a second national park proposal (RESTORE, no date). The extent to which tourism visions might overlap or conflict is not known without studies such as these.

Interviews. University of Maine-Orono's human subjects review board granted approval of the stakeholder interviews in July 2003. After approval, interviews began in August 2003 and were completed in January 2004. The purpose was to gain comments on the state of the industry. The NRC designed five open-ended questions (Appendix A) to develop recommendations for ensuring sustainable tourism and a range of recreational opportunities. Representing the committee, I executed the interviews with 30 face-to-face meetings and 13 phone interviews to those in the far-reaching geographic areas due to travel restraints. I recorded the interviews on paper – either hand written or directly typed into the computer. Each interviewee was asked to set aside 40 minutes for the interview; however, interviews lasted one hour on average with half of the participants speaking for an additional 20 minutes to fully answer the questions. The lengthy, candid interviews are evidence of stakeholders' passion to reveal the complexity of the industry. During this six-month process, I became an insider due to the epistemology – referring to the origins of knowledge – of this type of research. My professional background as a journalist had trained me in interview methods.

Data Analysis. Maine's tourism industry fits the qualitative research framework perfectly as its diverse players present diverse opinions on an array of sustainability sub-issues, creating gray areas. Multiple readings of the interviewees allowed for identifying themes, called codes, within one interview and then between all 43 to follow the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This process allowed me, as the researcher, to develop an intimacy with the data, thereby, identifying themes and categorizing and synthesizing the coded comments similar to what is called "open coding" (Strauss &

Corbin, 1990). The 14 sub-issues present: stewardship; single and/or multi-use; access to the resource; new and traditional recreation forms; community economic development; industry economic development; quality experience; infrastructure; marketing/branding/certification; interagency government efforts; educational outreach; tourism information/interpretation; collaborative partnerships; and conserved lands.

Informed Consent. Participation in the study was on a willing, voluntary basis. Consent was gained by completion of the five-question survey, whether in a face-to-face interview or by phone. Participants were free to not answer any of the questions, but this situation did not occur as all of the interviewees had confidence in their understanding of Maine's tourism industry and ability to contribute some comments to identify problems and/or improvements.

Confidentiality. Participants' recorded interviews on paper are held and stored in a safe location in the South Annex B office on the University of Maine-Orono campus. This data has been shared only with the NRC members for purposes of its final report to the state legislature. Participants in the study were informed that they would be named in the NRC report as one of the interviewees and that comments they make as Maine tourism experts can be associated with their name in the legislative report and in my thesis on sustainable tourism.

Recording Devices. NRC instructions made the determination to not use recording devices of any kind because committee co-chairs felt devices could be intrusive to interviewees, especially since the state can be misinterpreted as being invasive. The non-use of mechanized devices, however, follows the methodology of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation director Robert Stake, who does not believe in recording devices or data analysis software during the research process because it hampers the researcher's closeness to the data and ability to make note of subtleties of the responses (Stake, 1995).

Validity. Validity or credibility addresses how to prove the findings to be trustworthy (Maxwell, 1996). The primary tool to validate the data became the close reads given by the approximately 30 NRC members of each interview. As tourism industry professionals, they know these interviewees' "voices" and

could recognize discrepancies. In the legislative report submitted by the NRC, they recognized the in-depth effort of the data: *“The body of information contained in the interviews is some of the best resource material pertaining to the state of the state of nature tourism in Maine. The wealth of information provides not only a pulse on what is going on right now but also many excellent ideas and recommendations on what needs to be done to improve the opportunities and enhance resources.”*

Credibility of the data resulted from the intra-sample consistency. Although not all stakeholders expressed the same opinions, they raised concern on the same issues facing the industry. In addition, I compared my data analysis codes to those that NRC member Donna Fichtner identified in her summary paper (Fichtner, 2004) of the interviews that showed a great amount of overlap. The rich description captured in the interviews lends itself to details, rather than abstract generalities, that support the data’s credibility. Within a descriptive-interpretive qualitative inquiry, an absolute truth cannot be attained in most cases but rich description allows readers to feel as though they are listening to the interview, thereby, adding credibility to the data.

Chapter Structure. The next four chapters adapt the interviewee comments into a simple structure – the four tourism proposals that came from the Blaine House Conference on Natural-Resource Industries in November 2003. This study’s chapters are lengthy, in part to show the stakeholder dialogue. Two stakeholders might say the same thing but from a slightly different point of view. This study felt it important to incorporate heavy use of quotes to show the complexity. Within those chapters, dialogue is presented under themed headings to make comments simpler to absorb and recommendations are given specific to that chapter topic. Through the stakeholder dialogue, the thesis shows current thoughts on the state of the industry. In order to indicate the number of interviewed stakeholders who expressed a particular sentiment, I have used the term “most” for 75 percent or 35 people; “many” for 50 percent or 20 people; “some” for 25 percent or 12 people; and “few” for 10 percent or 4 people. The next four chapters are:

Chapter 4: Make Higher Education, Research and Extension Priorities

Chapter 5: Clarify and/or Enhance State Agency Roles and Responsibilities

Chapter 6: Implement Sustainable Tourism Economic Development Planning

Chapter 7: Create a Comprehensive Branding Campaign

CHAPTER 4: BLAINE HOUSE PROPOSAL

MAKE HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND EXTENSION PRIORITIES

RESEARCH STUDY

Education is essential to achieving a sustainable Maine tourism industry. This is one of the key tourism proposals that came from the Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-based Industries. The Nov. 17, 2003 conference produced strategies to strengthen tourism while benefiting the other natural resource sectors – forestry, agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries. Tourism, supposedly, brings all the natural resource sectors together. “You’ve got these independent sectors, and they, for the most part, don’t interact much,” said Nathaniel Bowditch, assistant director of the Office of Tourism, “but if you throw tourism in the mix, then you suddenly have a common ground.” Conference dialogue focused on four tourism proposals – education, state agency roles, economic development planning and branding – that came from the consensus of several state-level groups: the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Office of Tourism and the Maine Tourism Commission’s Natural Resources Committee. Proposals were echoed in a tourism white paper compiled for the conference by David Vail, professor of economics at Bowdoin College in Brunswick. Conference attendees, armed with background reports, discussed the significance of the proposals and elaborated on possible education policy points and state actions. “Maine is Vacationland, as it says on the license plate,” Bowditch added, “so why isn’t it as prominent in our educational system?”

Specifically, the conference led to one education recommendation presented to the governor:

1. Convene a Curriculum Development Committee. Representatives from the university and community college boards of directors as well as the Office of Tourism, Maine Tourism Commission (MTC) and key trade associations should develop a board to outline an associate and four-year degree program in hospitality and recreation.

In considering this recommendation, conference attendees offered the following observations:

- A number of programs in the university and community college system already exist; therefore, it would not necessarily be an involved process to integrate the interrelated

programs and offerings into a comprehensive overall program. This integration should consider the roles private educational institutions and high school curriculums play.

- Recognition and establishment of high-level curriculum offerings in tourism and recreation should support associated long-term research goals and extension service offerings.
- An underlying component should be to encourage the concept of sustainability.
- The involvement of industry in the development of curriculum would result in clear opportunities for career-track employment with high levels of success for graduates and stem the tide of Maine's "brain drain."

This chapter analyzes the Blaine House conference recommendation regarding education and related observations through the voices of the 43 diverse stakeholders in this study. (See Appendix B for the list of this study's interviewees.) It will become evident how the stakeholders agree or disagree with the conference recommendation.

INTRODUCTION

An education system can be shaped to assist the tourism industry, its current workers and its future workers. This topic, of interest in Maine, has been written about thoroughly in the academic literature. Part of the challenge for nature-based tourism curriculum is to modify what natural resource students are being taught (Propst, Wellman, Campa III, & McDonough, 2000). Plant identification has its place in the curriculum but so do more complex skills, such as building community relations. Specific content mastery must be balanced with broad understandings of the landscape if graduates are to work successfully with diverse publics; therefore, educators must be willing to accept some shift in content coverage. "Students leave our programs reasonably well versed in such things as soils, vegetation, recreation programming and facilities management but less well prepared for the 'wicked' problems inherent in working with the public" (Allen & Gould, 1986). Quality of classroom content, including its diversity, will affect the education level of an entire community, eventually, because students graduate and traditionally enter back into a community to work as natural resource professionals. The focus beyond the blackboard, to understand the complexity of tourism stakeholder desires, must grow in order for the industry to grow.

Sustainable tourism teaches students, citizens and communities to see beyond the status quo. “Sustainable tourism is something that can continue with insights and maintain itself and respond to its changing environment,” said Sheila Jans, senior fellow at the Quebec Labrador Foundation at a field desk in Madawaska. “It doesn’t just stay fixed in time.” Education can respond to tourism’s challenges today and into the future.

BACKGROUND

Education has been used in Maine, at a minimum level, to assess the tourism industry. A few broad research projects have been attempted with specific studies on tourism wage analysis and the economic impacts of cruise ships. Because broad tourism statistics remain fuzzy, despite the annual Longwoods numbers, entrepreneurs ask that education help define the details. They want to better understand how many people visit, especially within certain niches, in order to identify new goals – such as extending the summer tourism season. Individual niches have tried to gain numbers but have hit roadblocks because businesses are hesitant to release operation details. An educational institution might be viewed as a more trustworthy, or objective, data collector, than a government office or an association. Success will come, it is hoped, of the University of Maine’s survey of Maine Association of Sea Kayak Guides (MASKGI) entrepreneurs. Those in the industry turn toward education to identify clear numbers to tout tourism’s importance to the state.

Maine colleges offer a variety of tourism-related education programs to teach undergraduates primarily. These degrees that focus on community cohesiveness have the potential to strengthen Maine tourism. The Blaine House white paper did not mention any of Maine’s existing collegiate tourism programs and how those have played a role educating the state’s youth. The most established higher tourism education in the state is the Parks, Recreation and Tourism program, begun in 1972 and housed in the Forest Management department at the University of Maine-Orono with approximately 80 undergraduate and three graduate students enrolled annually. Since 1998 when two professors came onboard and re-shaped the program, 100 students have received their Bachelor’s of Science degrees with five Master’s of Science degrees in Forestry and four doctoral degrees in Forest Resources focused on parks, recreation and

tourism issues. The Parks, Recreation and Tourism program, offering a major and a minor, teaches wilderness recreation management, environmental interpretation, sustainable tourism and nature writing. The University of Maine-Orono, also, is one of a handful of schools to offer the prestigious National Association of Interpretation certification. Other statewide tourism-related programs are the University of Maine-Machias' recreation management major, the University of Maine-Presque Isle's recreation/leisure services major and Washington County Community College's two-year outdoor and heritage guide degree. Private colleges, such as Unity College, see the importance of tourism, too, with its Parks, Recreation and Ecotourism major. Demand exists for fuller statewide tourism education opportunities.

Anticipation has built for the new state-sponsored tourism research center, started in July 2005 as a University of Maine systemwide effort. The Center for Tourism Research and Outreach (CentRO) was first described in the "Proposed Deliverables to Enhance the University of Maine System's Contributions to the Growth and Sustainability of Maine's Tourism Industry" 2004 report by an interdisciplinary panel as a response to the Blaine House request to create a curriculum committee. The paper documented the university's plan to expand its tourism program with the following goals: to train entrepreneurs; to increase Maine's portion of the Northeast market share; to develop new tourist destinations, products and services; to improve tourism's economic contributions; to produce and distribute information sources and reports; and to assist the government in aligning itself with the industry. The center started with the intention to provide extension-type analysis and services to tourism businesses. CentRO has established a program with the Office of Tourism to monitor the industry on a weekly, monthly and seasonal basis and develop a reporting system to communicate this information to the industry through a Web site and semi-annual workshops. Already formed is the Maine Tourism Advisory Committee (MaineTAC) comprised of tourism leaders to advise its academic committee. According to the report's projection, CentRO will be fully functioning in 2008 if necessary financial commitments are available from the state, university, industry and grants. The 2005-06 and 2006-07 budgets are \$233,000 each, including \$60,000 from the University of Maine, \$43,000 from the University of Southern Maine, \$100,000 from state government and \$30,000 from the industry.

The opportunity exists to take advantage of the university's interest to develop extension service positions to work with the tourism industry. Before CentRO, the University of Maine-Orono had a

tourism-related extension position, but when the employee retired, his position was not filled. This position should be re-created, perhaps, in the Forest Management department. A review panel made up of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES), which recently studied the department as related to its forestry accreditation, suggested creating an extension position to focus on outdoor recreation. Perhaps an additional position should be added to the Parks, Recreation and Tourism program within the department and should function half time as extension.

ANALYSIS OF THE BLAINE HOUSE RECOMMENDATION

1. Convene a Curriculum Development Committee. *This one recommendation resulted from the Blaine House conference. Representatives from the university and community college boards of directors as well as the Office of Tourism director, Maine Tourism Commission and key trade associations should develop a board to outline an associate and four-year degree program in hospitality and recreation.*

This study's stakeholders made few direct comments in regard to outlining hospitality and recreation curriculums. Because most of the interviewees work outside an academic setting, they have left curriculum content to those who should know the essential components. Potential cross-campus degree programs are yet to be determined. For one stakeholder, there is some worry that academics designing tourism's future are far removed from the industry. "A fear of ours is that many people putting together academic papers on the tourism industry are not really in the tourism industry," said Greg Sweetser, who is in the tourism trenches every day as the executive director of Ski Maine in Portland. That said, stakeholders want to trust education to be part of the solution even though they can't envision what that plan looks like. Researchers, stakeholders suggested, document best practices, especially those that incorporate stewardship, in Maine and beyond. These references can provide models for tourism practitioners to use as an assessment tool on setting standards and monitoring participants.

Higher education, as referenced in the academic literature, should incorporate general educational methods that apply to all subject matters as well as specific teaching techniques to fit a tourism curriculum. A good educational institution, in general, should instill leadership and responsibility in multiple spheres of

students' lives, both societal and vocational (Schneider & Shoenberg, 1998). General classroom techniques include fostering non-lecture style dynamics so the focus is on the students and on the students working in groups to learn interpersonal interactions (Propst et al., 2000). Authority-driven teacher personas can be a detriment, as academics have discovered. They provide a negative model of appropriate professional behavior to students that they'll mirror in their careers. "If we present ourselves to our students as omniscient authorities, expecting passive acceptance of our wisdom, future resource management professionals will, understandably, treat the public in the same way" (Propst et al., 2000). The key, perhaps, is for professors to lean on the side of interpretation rather than traditional education. Interpretation, which raises questions, can send students on a quest while education, which provides answers, can close doors.

Teachers should focus more on connections to the natural resource community outside the classroom. This progression pays off when solid instruction takes place, leading to a solid understanding in the community of the need to manage the landscape for recreation and other opportunities. Students, including working professional seeking ongoing training, need preparation on how to plan and manage outdoor recreation effectively in diverse communities. "If we can build connectedness and communities of learning in the classroom, current and future natural resource professionals will be inclined to build communities of interest regarding the management of the nation's natural resources" (Propst et al., 2000). Through an education process in Maine, the tourism industry must take the lead to build a base of support in communities. Education can teach students, residents, communities, organizations and state government how to step forward to better the industry. In other words, education happens on many levels. "With proper attention to community planning, tourism education and a series of small successes," according to Bill Gartner of the Minnesota Extension Service at the Tourism Center in Minneapolis, "it will be possible to fire up community residents toward tourism" (Gartner, 2002).

The Office of Tourism can assist the process by consolidating a database of existing tourism programs, including extension, to be accessed by businesses to solve fractured information dissemination, stakeholders said. Extension opportunities – ways to reach and educate existing tourism businesses – are of prime concern and can serve businesses that want to diversify, like farm B&Bs. Extension provides guidelines and information for the industry by collecting statewide data. "A problem for the tourism industry is that there are so many different initiatives in the state," said Natalie Springuel, marine extension

associate for the Maine Sea Grant Program in Bar Harbor, “and no direct way that these are talking to each other.” A clearinghouse for the data, possibly located at the university, would prevent reinventing the wheel and encourage dialogue so that multiple tourism initiatives do not lead to duplication.

Nature-based tourism education, or curriculum, does not have to begin at the college level. It can begin well before or continue well after college. Much of Maine’s current environmental education falls into these categories. In both cases, ecology is studied inside and outside the classroom. Elementary school should be the beginning of natural resource education, according to the majority of Mainers. Stakeholders advocate, especially, for on-site education. The Western Mountains Foundation plans to provide environmental education to youth on its future 180-mile Mahoussocs-Moosehead multi-use trail. Students will be able to stay in 12 recreational huts on five-day natural resource education programs pre-crafted by a statewide 25-member advisory committee. These types of conservation camps will teach youth outdoor values, like hunting and fishing, and instill stewardship values in potential future tourism workers. Still, stakeholders commented on the current lack of opportunities. “I don’t think we do a good job in the state of educating our youth on stewardship of the environment and the interconnectedness of the environment and economics,” said Steve Wight, owner of the Sunday River Inn in Newry. Environmental education in grade school and college could be designed differently to become a win-win for the student and the natural resource. School children could earn school credit for trail work, for example. “Have a program in which kids get to work on a trail system and get points toward credit or college,” said Gloria Varney, owner of Nezinscot Farm in Turner. “Let’s get more kids involved as an incentive. This gets more people involved in their state and a sense of community.” After college, environmental education could continue through on-the-job training programs to enhance existing skills to produce a more knowledgeable Maine industry.

Tourism associations – especially niche recreation groups – provide training to their members to better their skills. Often, this training results in products that can be used to educate a wider audience. The Maine Snowmobile Association (MSA) created a computerized program on trail safety in 2004 for use by its members. Maine Sea Grant produced an educational brochure on sea kayak safety for the public. “The Maine Sea Grant’s challenge is to reach all the individual sea kayaking folks – people who venture out without a tour guide,” Springuel said. “How do we have the message reach them? ... The brochure was an effort for that.” Well-done interpretive publications will serve as a strong educational tool to assist visitors

with connecting stewardship messages. Information, incentives, degree programs and training, combined, will create a smarter and a greener tourism industry.

RELATED TO THE RECOMMENDATION

Because the recommendation focuses on curriculum, many education topics relate indirectly. Communities, for instance, need to study and understand their uniqueness to present their best to visitors. In the process, townspeople can deliver quality education connected to natural resource care because protection has become more important as Maine has become more travelled. “One of the beauties of Maine was that we didn’t have flashing arrows on the trail to the waterfall,” said Steve Wight, owner of the Sunday River Inn in Newry. “You had to come to visit Aunt Sally who knew. . . . As we put out documents on how to find Aunt Sally’s waterfall, it can become overrun.” Communities can teach visitors how to behave with a stewardship mindset. “We also have to provide education on how to use the resource,” Wight said. “We need to encourage guides and outfitting services on ways that the guest can interact with the resource, not just where the resources are.” Tourism-related associations and business, especially inns, can also influence visitor behavior. An attitude turnaround occurred within the hospitality industry on its role to protect the environment because, when fewer restrictions existed, they did such things as improperly dump trash. “In the ’70s, tourism groups like the Maine Innkeepers Association were an enemy of environmental issues,” Wight said. “. . . We’re seeing more and more hospitality-type operations embracing the idea of nature-based tourism. They are seeing that their guests are interested in coming to a place where the natural resources are in such a positive state of health.” This shows that no one, particularly businesses, should be left out sharing environmental education with the general public. Related topics include Encouraging Tourism Career Options; Managing Visitor Behavior; and Managing Industry Tension.

Encouraging Tourism Career Options. Education will lead Maine students to find rewarding careers that have them remain instead of leave the state. Enhanced college curriculum can foster student internship options at local businesses. Guide Garrett Conover of North Woods Ways in Willimantic takes on apprentices who pay for training. The benefit works both ways – knowledge for the apprentice and income for his business. Most people looking to get started in the tourism field, however, don’t have a

mentor like Conover to turn to. Potential entrepreneurs need to be taught the basics, such as how to manage a restaurant. “Whether a public or private effort, we should help Mainers invest in and start Maine businesses so we are not dependent on out-of-state entrepreneurs,” said Andy Kekacs, publisher of the online forest industry newsletter “Maine Woodsman.” “There is potential to offer training to rural people, so that they can have the skills to capitalize.” He and others don’t think Maine has trained that group well.

The industry could begin by offering mini-training events as a form of continuing education for those who want to add skills to gain employment or move to the next career level. Many tourism stakeholders would like to see businesses strengthen customer service with service training led by the state, the town or a chamber of commerce. One new development is the Maine Highlands Hospitality Industry Training of Maine, which began in 2005 with funding, in part, by the Office of Tourism. In this program, the Maine Highlands chamber of commerce teamed with the Greater Bangor Convention and Visitors Bureau, Eastern Maine Community College and the Tri-County Workforce Investment Board to develop a three-part, multi-day training series.

Specific sectors offer training to build a knowledgeable workforce full of career options. The Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance (MIBA), one of Maine’s best examples, reaches out to Wabanaki Indians – Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Micmac and Maliseet – to share the knowledge of ancient basketmaking. Approximately 30 Native American youth are training in the art of brown ash and sweet grass basketry, and more than 35 basketmakers display their work at the Wabanaki Arts Center Gallery, which is owned by MIBA, in Old Town. The organization spent nine years coordinating enough basketmakers to open the gallery, and now the alliance aims to increase its stock to sell on a future online site. Having a sufficient pool of employees is not a crisis for a lot of businesses because, if necessary, employees can be found overseas. This is not so with MIBA, said Theresa Hoffman, the executive director of the alliance, whose workforce must come from Maine. “Our people is our workforce,” she said. “Skills and knowledge needed to be saved and done as a group.” As the most skilled basketmakers have aged, preserving knowledge of Maine Indian crafts has become essential.

Overall, tourism career opportunities stand strong, stakeholders said, when the rest of Maine’s labor pool is strong. The tourism industry can succeed only if other labor industries that support tourism are healthy. Maine’s general labor force falls short, however, as skilled workers need to be more readily available. “We find that it’s one thing to come up with a shortage of housekeepers or dishwashers of

unskilled labor. You can get them from abroad,” said Sally Littlefield, co-owner of the Oakland House Seaside Resort in Brooksville. “It’s the skilled labor that we have trouble with like carpenters and plumbers. I feel like in the education system, the trades are not being valued.” The state’s education system, including community colleges, can solve this problem.

Managing Visitor Behavior. Education emphasizes the ability of management strategies by businesses and associations to influence visitor behavior. Inn employees, specifically, can serve as strong stewardship interpreters. These staffs that offer things-to-do suggestions to guests can take on a deeper role by explaining the value of the ecosystem and the local heritage. They can speak on local issues and give out supporting materials, regarding carrying out trash or staying on the trail. The Haraseeket Inn in Freeport, for instance, receives Audubon’s stewardship materials to educate its guests. Inns can be part of the education solution if empowered to do so by state and local environmental groups. Tourism associations have equal power to influence visitors’ actions by setting standards that guide the behavior of their members. Efforts like these, stakeholders said, allow associations to function as watchdog groups to prevent abuses. Below are strategies by several prominent “educating” associations, involving huge numbers of people, who reach out to their members and/or the wider public.

- The MSA teaches its 290 snowmobile clubs, which include 14,500 families and 22,000 businesses, management tactics to reinforce how members act on the trail. “We ask club members to behave themselves,” said Bob Meyers, executive director of the Maine Snowmobile Association in Augusta. “Members get by osmosis how to do the right thing. We say ‘Ride Right in Maine,’ which refers to landowner relations, safety and alcohol use. We stress that snowmobilers go on groomed, marked trails.”
- Maine’s island health improved due to MITA’s teachings. During the summer of 2003, the association posted signage with leave-no-trace messages. Then, at the height of the season, staff visited its 80 islands to examine trail condition and concluded positive results based on little human waste and soil erosion evidence. “A lot of management that had been initiated is working – like with camping, people are not going off the trail,” said Springuel, who works with MITA through her Maine Sea Grant position.

- The Sportsman/Forest Landowners Alliance serves as an educational outlet for its members so that two natural resource industries – tourism and forestry – can coincide instead of conflict. “In the past, landowners have held annual gatherings at sporting camps in the woods to discuss issues,” said Sarah Medina, land-use director at Seven Islands Land Co. headquartered in Bangor. “We talked about the relationship for forest management and how that affected wildlife and in turn the hunters and fishermen.”
- The Natural Resources Council of Maine, which has a broad conservation policy mandate, aims to educate Maine’s natural resource professionals and public on environmental issues. At a seminar it hosted for guides, the conservation organization discussed natural history to educate them on the basic knowledge and storytelling that’s part of the guiding experience and to raise awareness of conservation issues. “[The seminar] was very successful but never gained support of the professional Maine Guides’ Association because they contain the big bear hunters,” said Jeff McEvoy, who worked for the Natural Resources Council for five years and is now the owner of Weatherby’s in Grand Lake Stream. “The big bear hunters are very conservative and are suspicious of anything that has the ‘conservation’ word in it.”
- Friends groups, affiliated with many parks, perform an educational link to the surrounding community. The Friends of Sunkhaze Meadows received grant money to produce oral history booklets of how this U.S. Fish & Wildlife property has been used. “Through Friends of Sunkhaze Meadows, advocacy work was done of people supporting the preservation and education around Maine,” said Carl Little, director of communications and marketing for the Maine Community Foundation in Ellsworth that supplied the grant money. “We thought this was a wonderful way to preserve it both historically, and, by preserving it, people would appreciate it.”
- In some cases, volunteers do educating, too, to make up for a lack of management. At the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, where more personnel are needed to greet visitors, volunteers act as rangers educating the public. “There are Allagash Ambassadors where volunteers will go up and help people who are there,” said Gil Gilpatrick, a canoe guide in Skowhegan and

author of two books on the Allagash. “If one ranger could answer questions of about one out of 20, then with volunteers, you could answer more.”

To influence behavior, some national organizations produce a code of ethics. These groups serve as stewardship interpreters through their distributed materials. “The American Birding Association puts out a code of ethics for birders to uphold,” Walker said, “and a state could do a similar thing.” Someone in Maine has done a similar thing from a business point of view described in the next section.

Managing Industry Tension. Many issues arise with the public’s love/hate relationship with the tourism industry, according to stakeholders. Education can define the areas of tension and can present an objective voice even within the tourism industry. “I think there is a need for educating the industry and the general public for what tourism is,” said Nathaniel Bowditch, assistant director of the Maine Office of Tourism. “It is one of the economic tools, and the rest of the state needs to see how they can be good stewards of their natural resource base.” Tourism business operators should seek education to influence sustainable business practices. One professional Maine business association has exceeded expectations of influence on its members. MASKGI wrote its own “Professional Code of Ethics” in an attempt to influence members behavior. The non-profit organization states its founding principles:

- To preserve the natural resources and free enterprise system upon which we are dependant
- To protect the safety of the paddling public and our employees by providing safe, high quality services, equipment and facilities
- To promote education in sea kayaking safety and paddling skills as well as professionalism of the sea kayaking industry.

Each business member agrees to operate safe facilities, to provide for proper skill development of guests and guides, to maintain liability insurance and to practice ethical business standards by speaking favorably of others, abiding by contractual agreements and avoiding predatory pricing practices. “Members who cannot agree to abide by these simple principles must decide whether their membership is of mutual benefit to themselves as well as the other members of MASKGI,” as printed on organizational materials.

www.mainecekayakguides.com/ethics.html

On a broader level outside the tourism industry, the five natural resource industries can educate each other on ways to better relationships between them. Forestry would be wise to educate recreationists on benefits of its industry, and the state should educate recreationists on how to maintain positive landowner relations. Foresters with International Paper voiced their surprise at the strong negative public perceptions of multi-use areas, especially of cut areas. While hiking the Appalachian Trail, one forester overheard conversations in lean-tos in which some hikers hated multiple use and judged forestry for it. “There is a mindset of a few users who make this difficult,” said Joel Swanton, IP’s manager of forest ecology, forest resources for the Northeast region. “. . . With the increased business of tourism, there is a spillover effect of people looking at how well you keep your property. The Appalachian Trail corridor was a contentious issue, and users of it were critical of the adjacent area.” Existing tension threatens how willing industrial forest landowners may be to share their land with a judgmental public. “Open access relationship begins to erode,” said Gary Donovan, IP’s wildlife biologist, “because of fear of adverse perceptions and perceived liabilities for public use and costs of maintaining that use.” Nonetheless, forestry needs to take responsibility for part of the current breakdown, and the state needs to inform all participants of their potential. “Landowners have to pay closer attention to the aesthetic,” Swanton said. Bettering the tourism landscape will come from contentious industries educating each other’s stakeholders.

THIS STUDY’S CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Note to Readers: Full names and titles of stakeholders are presented here for the reader’s convenience. (See Appendix B for the list of this study’s stakeholders.)

Tourism education’s role should be emphasized to identify issues and create management strategies leading to a sustainable environment. Education teaches foresight and planning techniques to individuals, organizations and communities wanting to learn. Ideally, education’s influence should reach beyond the college student, to the business and finally to the visitor. An expanded Maine tourism degree beyond what now exists – primarily the University of Maine’s Parks, Recreation and Tourism program – can unite the tourism industry and, potentially, teach outreach, which is just as essential to a healthy tourism landscape. Education can teach a community even about itself. In 2003, the Quebec Labrador Foundation of the Atlantic Center for the Environment studied why rural residents in the St. John Valley of

northern Maine area reside there. “The study examines what they feel is threatening their culture and what they love about their area,” said Sheila Jans, senior fellow with the Quebec Labrador Foundation at a field desk in Madawaska. “A man who lived in Washington, D.C., at one time, said: ‘I came back home because I couldn’t see the stars or breathe the air.’ I thought that was so great. A lot of people move back because of the geography that has a huge impact because of sense of place.” Education, clearly, needs to play a role in Maine’s tourism future. The four goals listed below can lead Maine to a stronger education system.

1. Teach Communities Their Potential. Education will help dispel myths surrounding tourism to Maine’s far-reaching communities. It is difficult for residents to understand, for instance, why visitors would want to pay for an experience that they as residents take for granted. Through education, it is possible for the local citizenry to realize their community’s potential, according to the University of Minnesota’s Tourism Center in Minneapolis (Gartner, 2002). Potential is difficult to envision when some hard-luck communities are intent on making it from day to day rather than looking forward, and members give excuses for not considering tourism. The naysayers conclude: There is nothing for a tourist to see or do in our community; the travel industry is too seasonal; and tourism jobs are low paying. Extension-oriented education has helped small Minnesota communities see the value of integrating tourism into a diverse economic development strategy rather than substitute tourism for other industrial pursuits, thereby, creating a one-industry town (Gartner, 2002). The University of Maine, perhaps in the Department of Forest Management, should add tourism extension positions to enhance community interest.

2. Make Students Part of Society. College students do not learn their most valuable lessons typically while sitting at a desk, as the landscape beyond the blackboard teaches natural resource lessons. Learning about life outside the classroom, however, can be a challenging task for students, who tend to be more timid. Teachers should not assume that students are integrated into society before entering class nor possess the ability to unravel complex natural resource landscape even in their own backyard. “One thing that we can expect as educators is that students are unfamiliar both with the everyday environment of the natural resources management professional and also with people who live in circumstances with dependencies on natural resources far different from their own” (Propst et al., 2000). In a state like Maine

filled often with polar views on how to approach natural resource management, students need additional communication and analytical skills. Maine's five natural resource industries are still learning how to get along. Classroom assignments need to simulate fostering participatory democracy. One academic has her students go on fieldtrips to primary schools and senior citizen centers to act as teachers by facilitating discussion on an environmental topic in order to learn how to manage and direct dialogue (Propst et al., 2000).

3. Empower Citizens to Make Decisions. Local citizens only make a difference in the natural world around them only if they feel as though they are empowered to do so. The role of a public administration should be to foster collaborative decision-making, acknowledging that citizens can learn technical information. So often, laypeople's opinions are dismissed as uneducated when, in truth, citizens gather knowledge about natural resources issues through recreation activities on the simple side to policy making at the complex end with volunteerism somewhere in the middle (Propst et al., 2000). Questions need to be posed of academic institutions. How can the learning environment in higher education be altered, for instance, to address this bias and demonstrate the value of citizen participation while simultaneously giving current and future natural resource professionals the knowledge and skills they will need to embrace increasing societal demands for more voice? (Propst et al., 2000). Care must be taken so that the public's feedback is not solicited only at contentious times. This can be a typical scenario, unfortunately, separating the natural resource manager and the local citizen who encounter each other at angry public hearings (Propst et al., 2000).

4. Develop Guiding Sustainability Principles. Stakeholders believe principles of sustainability should be defined and applied across the board within tourism. Sustainability, therefore, depends on how tourism businesses train their workers on the importance of stewardship. Maine Audubon acts responsibly by developing staff ethics and training leaders on such principles as staying on trail and staying off private property. When the basic principles are in effect, a commonality can exist between operations of diverse tourism businesses, such as a guide business and an inn. "Come up with a set of guiding principles for the entire industry," said Natalie Springuel, marine extension associate for the Maine Sea Grant Program in Bar

Harbor. “Sea kayaking has done it specifically, but not even sea kayakers [operate] on principles of recycling or energy efficiency. These standards could be what make Maine jump off the map.” The tourism industry will be strongest when all businesses – even indirect tourism entities – promote a sustainability message. Many real estate agents, for example, offer clients literature on ecology to encourage stewardship. “Real estate agents give out literature on piping plovers and least terns to people renting cottages,” said Judy Walker, a Maine Audubon staff naturalist and director of the Environmental Center at Gilsland Farm in Falmouth. Sustainable tourism will happen if all levels of society – residents, business both tourism and non-tourism, and communities – echo the same clear message.

This chapter on tourism education establishes a foundation for which the industry can operate and improve, particularly through sustainability theories. This education proposal leads into the three other proposals that gain in specificity: state roles, economic development planning and branding. The next chapter on state roles examines, with input from interviewees, who will serve as educators, how they will be organized and how they will solve the core issues affecting the larger stakeholder audience.

CHAPTER 5: BLAINE HOUSE PROPOSAL
CLARIFY STATE AGENCY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RESEARCH STUDY

Effective state agency roles are a part of achieving a healthy Maine tourism industry. This idea is one of the tourism proposals from the Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-based Industries. The Nov. 17, 2003 conference produced proposals to strengthen tourism while benefiting the other natural resource sectors. Conference dialogue focused on four tourism proposals – state agency roles, economic development planning, education and branding – that came from the consensus of several state-level groups: the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Office of Tourism and the Maine Tourism Commission’s Natural Resources Committee.

Specifically, the conference led to three state agency roles recommendations sent to the governor:

1. Broaden the Maine Office of Tourism mandate. Provide resources, including recruiting two business development specialists, so the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) can deliver technical assistance and development support focusing on tourism and recreation opportunities relating to businesses, communities and tourism regions.

2. Improve tourism and recreation economic development incentive offerings. Do a full analysis of present business support and economic development offerings, including how they apply to and support tourism and recreation business interest needs as well as promote quality jobs in the tourism and recreation sector.

3. Coordinate recreational land management, utilization and promotion. Convene a task force, to be overseen by the State Planning Office (SPO), of public and private land trust interests, including parks and public lands, to compile a comprehensive conserved land database of present and proposed holdings. In addition, convene a representative body of conserved land interests, private land interests and recreational interests for the purpose of reconciling a land-management directive that reflects the need for open land, public access and sustainability of the natural resources. Support the Land for Maine’s Future program (LMF) with emphasis on a linkage between existing holdings and proposed acquisitions.

To consider these recommendations, conference attendees indicated other governmental factors that should be evaluated through the following observations:

- Provide aggressive economic and business support systems and incentives to the businesses, communities and regions that are looking to grow their tourism and recreation products.
- Evaluate inconsistent messages sent by state agencies across agency lines that create a level of mistrust or confusion for private interests and can hurt economic development efforts.
- Translate land-management policies in both the public and private sectors into an overarching plan that recognizes the economic opportunities of tourism so businesses, communities and regional interests can invest confidently.
- Define a clear chain of leadership as it relates to state agency roles in promoting sustainable tourism and increasing the capacity to do so.

This chapter analyzes the three Blaine House conference recommendations regarding state roles and related observations through the voices of the 43 diverse stakeholders interviewed for this study. (See the full list of stakeholders in Appendix B.) It will become evident how these stakeholders agree or disagree with the conference recommendations. Stakeholders want more state government assistance that can come in the form of marketing, infrastructure, economic incentives, access, land management and partnerships. “The basis of our tourism industry is based on our scenic resources. I don’t think the state has done a very good job seeing that or connecting the dots,” said Judy Walker, Maine Audubon staff naturalist and director of the Environmental Center at Gilsland Farm in Falmouth. “It isn’t working to ensure that those natural resources are going to stay in a state that people want to come and see.” Maine stakeholders ask the state to take action to protect the natural as well as economic landscapes.

INTRODUCTION

Across the United States, government entities have not been responsive to the public at times. “A growing devaluation of the institution of government, especially in rural America, has sent public servants to more clearly demonstrate the real value their agencies provide to dependent communities and visiting publics” (Bruns, 1995). Government, to re-establish itself as a tourism leader, needs to dismantle agency

silos and establish an open climate. Officials should explain choices and consequences while leaving decisions up to the state's citizens (Propst, Wellman, Campa & McDonough, 2000). Maine government recognizes the potential to partner with the tourism industry, as its interest in sustainable tourism has increased over the past few years. Within the state's politics, division exists, however, between the two sides of government – legislators and agencies. Legislators tend to depend on regulation and to rely on agencies to foster the right climate.

Government, at all levels, should minimally set and enforce regulations of the environmental management process. “Agreement on standards and environmental codes of practice, encouragement of environmental audits, and education and awareness programmes, are all part of the role of the public sector in striking a balance between regulation and self-regulation to reinforce the trend toward sustainable tourism development” (Pigram, 2000). Government can assess environmentally unfriendly practices and force resisting tourism operators to conform to ecological standards to maintain the healthy natural resources upon which the industry depends. Surprisingly, these regulations are not viewed always as negative. Regulations provide a quality experience, according to evidence from other places like Minnesota. One Maine stakeholder recalled a superb nature-based vacation in the regulated Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCA), located in 1 million acres of federal land between Minnesota and Canada (www.bwcaw.org). “To get in the Boundary Waters, we had to do an incredible amount of paperwork and the fees were incredible,” said Garrett Conover, co-owner of North Woods Ways guiding business in Willimantic, “but I’d pay any amount for the experience.” Maine’s heavily regulated Baxter State Park offers a successful experience environmentally and economically, as visitors line up in February to reserve their favorite July campground site. The state’s inland stakeholders, who normally dislike any government intervention, applaud Baxter’s strict operations. “The ideal, unfortunately, involves regulation,” said Paul Fichtner, owner of Big Lake Equipment in Greenville and the Penobscot Lake Lodge located 90 miles northwest. “If you can keep people on the trails, then you’re not ruining the trails.” Sustainable tourism, by definition, favors self-regulatory measures over formal regulation, but clear regulations can promote multiple players to follow the same path of objectives.

State-authorized guidelines can achieve peace between recreationists competing for the same land parcels, especially those not designated clearly. “The quiet user will put up with regulation because they

know in the end that it will be what they want,” Conover added. “The motor users won’t put up with regulation.” As multiple players join together in partnerships, expectations of behavior will be expressed. Government officials should get involved in community-based partnerships, due to shifts in leisure trends and the economy, to jointly determine the future (Bruns, 1995). State agencies have responded with task forces, for instance, to address public behavior on recreational lands. The Department of Conservation’s Bureau of Parks and Lands (DOC’s BPL) created the Off-road Vehicle Division to educate landowners about snowmobiles and ATVs. Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W) created Project Landshare to attempt to decrease no-trespass postings to benefit recreational use.

Dialogue is needed on many fronts from regulation to development to stewardship, with the state leading the way. This chapter identifies that discussion. The state’s agency roles, as connected to tourism, appear endless based on the multitude of stakeholder comments and thickness of this chapter on governmental opportunities.

BACKGROUND

To modify the state’s roles and responsibilities, it’s necessary to understand current political structures. Often the legislature hears tourism-related bills, such as state Rep. Sean Faircloth’s (D-Bangor) Legislative Document 946 in 2003, and multiple agencies make individual proposals (Faircloth, 2003). This section attempts to document the roles and the climate in which actions are made. The prime function of the Office of Tourism has been to market the state. It operated in 2003 with \$6.9 million and in 2004 with \$7.2 million. The budget boost came from a dedicated funding formula – the meals and lodging tax – put in practice in 2004. Today’s budget remains more stable due to the ongoing tax revenues, five percent of the meals and lodging tax, that go to the Office of Tourism instead of fully to the state’s General Fund. The 2005 and 2006 budgets, however, were frozen at approximately \$7.5 million due to tight state dollars. To better the tourism industry, government reorganization is the gut response from most people in and outside of government. Reorganization must occur, stakeholders said, before proceeding with a statewide strategy. Many stakeholders are critical of the agencies for not acting pro-tourism but acting by the status quo. In defense of Maine government, its ability to lead has been hampered by a tense climate in which polarized sides do not talk. One stakeholder who works on a regional commission said she understands the

state's overall frustration with a diffused tourism industry that has not responded to attempted contacts. "You need both the carrot and the stick," said Lee Sochasky, executive director of the St. Croix International Waterway Commission in Calais, "and sometimes you end up hitting them in the end with the carrot." To continue to discuss government roles, two factors should be kept in mind as context: Documenting Agency Roles and Analyzing Tourism's Climate.

Documenting Agency Roles. Scattered government entities have often confused instead of clarified tourism's path. For the legislature, tourism has been a broad sector in which multiple committees, from transportation to wildlife, hear related proposals. The legislature's Business Research and Economic Development (BRED) committee, which stretches to serve all types of economic matters, heard the proposed ecotourism bill. On the day the tourism hearing occurred so did a nutrition-labeling debate for restaurants. Without one legislative home, tourism issues bounce around perpetuating common stereotypes, stakeholders said, that tourism is only the kitschy motel or diner down the road due to the focus on the meals and lodging tax. Often the legislature is said to make policy decisions without fully hearing what stakeholders say because those in the industry find it difficult to spend the time and money to travel to Augusta over and over when a bill's discussion can be delayed or rescheduled. Tourism providers can make their voices known, interviewed stakeholders said, perhaps if given stipends for travel to Augusta. "Those of us in the business community find it hard to spend the time (studying tourism issues) because many of our staffs don't have lobbyists who can go and participate in these communities," said Greg Sweetser, executive director of the non-profit Ski Maine in Portland. "When we go to Augusta to testify on legislation, the business community is pulling their hair out because sometimes the matter is delayed or postponed ... If you hear some groans, it's because not enough businesses are represented here."

At the agency level, a unified approach should occur by multiple agencies, especially IF&W and DOC's BPL, to assist the Office of Tourism with a solid strategy. Success or failure in the industry depends on many state bodies having a hand in tourism in a united fashion, perhaps through an interagency tourism board, to be explored further later in this chapter. "Education could flow out of a holistic look at natural resources," said Steve Wight, owner of the Sunday River Inn in Newry, "where they are not broken down where one looks at birds, another at trees and another at hospitality." Stakeholders have said the problem is

that the state agencies do not consider tourism a focus. IF&W turns to tourism simply to have recreationists buy hunting and fishing licenses, and DOC turns away because it receives no benefit from tourists coming to state parks. Fees collected from state park admissions, surprisingly, do not go back to the parks.

“Nobody who works for any of those state agencies gives a shit about tourism,” said Richard Anderson, former DOC commissioner and Maine Audubon executive director. “I don’t think state park people see their role as promoting tourism. Their role is to have neat clean state parks.” BPL gears itself toward Mainers and not tourists, according to stakeholders who share personal stories. In the late ’80s, Dianne Tilton of the Machias Chamber of Commerce encountered a lack of interest when she contacted the bureau to request state parks maps to distribute to travelers. The bureau only sent one map, said Tilton, who worked for the chamber then and is now the executive director of the non-profit Sunrise County Economic Council in Machias. “I was told that BPL was there to provide land for the people of Maine and not for tourists,” Tilton said. “These are public lands of the state, and what is this balance? Is this part of our tourism industry or not?” Tourism has not appeared to be a focus of individual state agencies or a coordinated effort between them. There’s a sense that the agencies don’t talk to each other, often running in different directions. Something as simple as sharing marketing photos has proved to be confusing. Matt Libby, president of Libby Sporting Camps in Ashland and a participant on IF&W advisory councils, said, “I remember when the tourism office didn’t have a good picture of a moose and asked me for one, but I said that you should go talk with Inland Fish & Wildlife.” Stakeholders would like to picture the agencies working more cohesively.

Missed opportunities between agencies can have severe consequences, because what one agency does can hurt another. A turkey reintroduction by IF&W harmed agricultural land as hunters trampled over fields to hunt down the huge bird population. “The so-called successful reintroduction of turkey, which involves a major hunt, is a huge problem for our growers,” said Dave Bell with the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine in Orono. “So, this is an example of how success can be a negative.” Agencies need to see outside their normal operating boundaries so initiatives do not conflict. The Department of Transportation (DOT), for example, has been called internally focused. It has control over the tourism transportation money but only pays for technical assistance rather than giving regional associations the funds and allowing them to decide how to distribute those funds.

Government officials need to listen to community input, stakeholders indicated. Existing tourism plans, like the Office of Tourism's current five-year strategy, need outside contributions. Agencies, but especially the Office of Tourism, should be listening to its constituents, stakeholders said. "React to proposals that come from the regions," Tilton said. "Jonesport decided that they wanted to look into tourism but not be a tourism trap." Augusta, demonstrating progress, has sought out businesspeople to be on government councils. These commissions become a place in which the private sector can be heard. Residents of Madawaska have told the office to market to French Canadians, focusing in on those who arrive by plane in Moncton, New Brunswick. "What goes a long way is if the state agencies get out of their towns and come and learn," said Sheila Jans, a Quebec Labrador Foundation senior fellow at a Madawaska field desk in the St. John Valley. "They don't need to just put so much money in marketing right now but get down in the field. You have to start building trust and coalitions. This is a long-term investment in our community. It will be community by community that Maine can promote itself."

Analyzing Tourism's Climate. An atmosphere of rejection has taken hold as a result of general dissatisfaction in the tourism industry and with it by the other natural resource industries. Government is said to be unresponsive to entrepreneurs, making them feel ignored. It's possible, in some cases, to identify who is doing the rejecting and who is on the receiving end.

The frustrating atmosphere for windjammer operators can be used to demonstrate a negative multi-level government message, even if unintentional. Town officials can be dismissive of windjammers, and other tourism businesses, with cold responses to inquiries to visit. Windjammers, for instance, seeking to dock in town harbors find no room due to unlimited moorings in their path. "Towns can limit moorings if they want the bigger boats to come in," said Kip Files, owner of the Victory Chimes three-masted schooner docked in Rockland and now up for sale for \$1.5 million. Camden area officials, after doing an impact study more than a decade ago, changed their tone when realizing the dollar figures. "There had been the idea that 'these boats are just in the way,'" Files said, "but they kept those vessels because the financial impact was huge." Government is not inviting, stakeholders said, to their tourism presence and their potential revenues. Several concerns about the climate exist at the state level. "I never felt like the state helped us," Files said. "If we left, personally, no one would care." Fairness of state agency actions has

become an issue. One agency enforces regulations that do not apply to constituents of another agency. Windjammer captains said state rules are tighter on them than lobster boat operators, who do not have to pass driving tests. “In the lobster industry, you don’t have to take a rules-of-the-road test or anything. Lobstermen have to buy a license to fish but not to drive their boat,” Files said. “It’s frightening.” Those agencies for which tourism is not their prime focus are accused of turning a deaf ear to tourism stakeholders. The Department of Marine Resources (DMR), for example, regulates ocean waters up to three miles off the coast but has not assisted windjammers to navigate around aquaculture pens. “The state regulates the huge fish farms that boaters can’t get around,” Files said. “I’m not against aquaculture, but we have to work together.” Other tourism entrepreneurs have felt dismissed by the DMR. Penobscot Bay residents, for example, felt unheard by the department in 2003 over an application for a fin-fish farm to be established in the bay. These residents, who rely on tourism as the economic base of the community, did not want a fin-fish farm operation in their backyard due to pollution and industrialization. “The islands are where we have been taking our guests for years,” said Sally M. Littlefield, co-owner of the Oakland House Seaside Resort in Brooksville and member of the East Penobscot Bay Environmental Alliance. “I do see [fin-fish farming] as incompatible with our business offering. The way DMR rules are written doesn’t give us a say at all. It doesn’t look at any land-based businesses as having merit or value.” Government – at the town and state levels – is said to act in a way that perpetuates conflict.

Compatibility of tourism with the other natural resource industries is crucial to the future of all the industries. How tourism interacts with the other natural resources can be looked at in two ways – tourism is the one unfairly treated or the other industries receive the brunt of tourism’s operations. The state can do more, stakeholders said, to foster dialogue to minimize conflict and enhance this needed cohesiveness. Historically, relationships were built as private paper companies played host to recreationists, including hunters, fishermen, snowmobilers and ATVers. “All of this permissive good neighborliness by the company helps contribute to a sense many full-time residents of these northern climes have – to wit, that the land is really theirs” (Rolde, 2001). Foresters viewed uses, in particular logging and recreation, as compatible. During Maine’s cooperative past, recreation traditions ensured access because guides served as the eyes for landowners. “When we started sporting camps back at the turn of the century, they wanted us here. Before we could keep an eye on things and watch for fires,” Libby said. “Now they might want us

here more as ambassadors.” Mainers rely on this willingness of private landowners to share their land. “In other states, you just can’t park your car and walk in the woods anywhere,” said Gary Donovan, a wildlife biologist with International Paper in Bucksport. Traditional land-use relationships between the industries are special to Maine.

Today’s tourism isn’t compatible with the natural resource industries, some said, believing the industry dominates the other agencies. Tourism should have a give-and-take relationship leading to recognition of all the natural resources, according to a cross section of stakeholders. “The state can take the lead on having a policy around tourism and working natural resources that recognizes both,” said Joel Swanton, International Paper’s manager of forest ecology, forest resources for the Northeast region in Bucksport. “Right now the state supports tourism at the expense of the natural resources. We need to recognize the natural resource industries and that their livelihood is critical to the success of tourism.” Fewer conflicts would arise, landowners said, if a comprehensive state government policy existed. Without appropriate environmental and economic policies, tourism costs both landowners and the public. The public pays by being cut off from private access, such as International Paper’s past restrictions on Route 9, due to the impact of cumulative use.

The state’s treatment of tourism and non-tourism entrepreneurs has an impact but so does its treatment of volunteers, a forgotten group working quietly to create a strong tourism landscape. Recognition needs to go to these people who build or maintain much of the infrastructure. “The amount of volunteer staff is big. This is the time I should be here at my business,” said Fichtner, Greenville’s snowmobile trail maintenance organizer. “With as much money as snowmobiles bring in, we shouldn’t have to be volunteering our time.” Realizing the value of volunteers, the state could coordinate groups by town or project. Friends’ groups, perhaps, could be organized since only a few state parks, such as Eagle Island and Fort Knox, have these crucial groups. The state could take on organizing more volunteer efforts even though it’s a tedious task. “We need more volunteer organizations, especially for each state park,” said Anderson, who suggested this coordination when he was the head of the DOC. The state needs to recognize that much of its No. 1 industry is done on the backs of volunteers.

ANALYSIS OF THE THREE BLAINE HOUSE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Broaden the Maine Office of Tourism Mandate. *This is the first of three sub-goals within clarifying state agency roles. This proposal suggests providing resources so that DECD, which contains the Office of Tourism, can deliver technical assistance and development support focusing on tourism and recreation opportunities relating to businesses, communities and tourism regions. It also includes recruiting at least two business development specialists that represent tourism and recreation interests. Since the conference, a business development firm, Fermata Inc. of Poultney, Vt., was hired by the governor's office to report on tourism and released its results in June 2005.*

The Office of Tourism's mandate restricts use of its budget to be used on marketing, specifically out-of-state marketing, but the office can no longer wear just this one hat because its position can keep it distant from clients. Stakeholders believe the restrictive Office of Tourism mandate needs to be diversified, ideally with development and protection aspects. To the office's credit, it has attempted informally to broaden its role by initiating dialogue and coordination with other agencies. By knowing tourism's trends, demands and needs, it seeks to provide technical assistance to manage or to build infrastructure to maintain the physical resources. To do this, the office must get up close and personal with entrepreneurs, communities and tourists and be given the resources, both human and financial. In this section, interviewed stakeholder comments are placed into the following four categories: Serving Tourists; Serving Communities; Serving Entrepreneurs and Industry; and Diversifying Office of Tourism Marketing.

Serving Tourists. A knowledgeable office should satisfy the needs of nature-based tourists in one place. Some visitor inquiries to the Office of Tourism have been routed outside the office. "When I worked in the Maine Conservation Corps, I received all sorts of tourist calls sent to me from other government agencies about hikes and locations that someone in the tourism office should be able to handle and not send you through seven different agencies," said Ken Spalding, who is now the Maine Woods project coordinator of RESTORE: The North Woods. "It should be one-stop shopping." As tourists enter the state, the Office of Tourism would ideally "greet" them, hoping to guide their experiences, especially by emphasizing eco-minded activities.

Tourist-oriented rest stops are run by the Maine Tourism Association (MTA), under contract with the state to operate these centers and produce the official state map handed out free. Rest stops could be improved with high-tech gadgetry, such as cameras with live feeds from atop scenic Mt. Katahdin or on puffin-breeding Eastern Egg Rock. The state could build and market new natural resource tourism centers – or nodes – with multi-agency support. This would alleviate promotion burdens on individual towns. “One hundred and eighty towns can’t afford to advertise individually, but the state can advertise the nodes,” said Bucky Owen, former commissioner of IF&W and a retired University of Maine wildlife ecology professor residing in Orono. The future of a Natural Resource Education Center (NREC) in Greenville holds promise as an efficient and effective node. When built, it could offer fishing licenses from Inland Fisheries and Wildlife with state park maps from the DOC with a list of area campgrounds from the Office of Tourism. “We want multiple agencies housed here and serve as a gateway, too, with a 24-hour bathroom – if you have that, then you should get ‘x’ percent of funding,” said John Simko, the Greenville town manager and former Sangerville town manager. “This set-up would encourage NREC and other potential centers to do certain things to get the money.” Interagency offices could be located in each information center as part of a way to better serve the public. Increased management of centers, both existing and yet-to-be-built, is needed. When driving along inland Maine roads, tourists come upon infrequently used rest areas, some without basic facilities like toilets. Working rest stops are needed to serve tourists’ most basic needs. Many Maine drivers stop at Irving gas stations, which advertise clean bathrooms, to use the facilities because there is a lack of public restrooms in some areas. “Department of Transportation has had the responsibility of the rest stops, and they can be nasty, whether on Route 1 or I-95,” Tilton said. “One of the last things a tourist wants to see is a sign that says, ‘Don’t drink the water.’” Maine should shut down operation of little-used rest areas, perhaps, and put money into larger visitor centers – in Millinocket, Bethel, Grand Lake Stream, Greenville and Patten – with Department of Transportation funding. “There are five rest areas throughout Piscataquis County that are not heavily used,” Simko said. “Some [DOT] monies could be put toward regional money.”

Finally, the office is only permitted to market out of state, which is cause for concern because industry statistics show the high numbers of Mainers recreating in their own state. The state needs to change its Office of Tourism mandate to allow the office to focus on in-state tourists. Three-quarters of

2003's 44 million trips were day-trips with half of those taken by Maine residents. In 2004, the Maine Tourism Commission (MTC) organized the first formal campaign to encourage residents to recreate in state. The industry, not the Office of Tourism, gathered the \$100,000 to run "It Must Be Maine" TV commercials. Not all the responsibility of in-state marketing should fall on industry groups like the MTC and the Maine Tourism Alliance.

Serving Communities. The Office of Tourism must reach out beyond its Augusta gray stone walls, stakeholders said, offering different levels of services to communities near and far according to need. Many communities feel shut out or at least not invited into the process. "It's frustrating for us up here," said Jans, referring to the Madawaska area. "I understand why these areas become silent, especially when asked, 'Why didn't you apply for that grant?' It's upsetting when an agency will just dismiss you." Communities are sensitive to governmental response. When making on-site field visits, the Office of Tourism should be aware of the tone it sets with the public. Those in rural areas, like Aroostook County, can feel misunderstood. "I don't think that the [Office of Tourism] wanted to be up here. They had to endure the drive," Jans added. "This was not a good thing. Tourism must take the time to listen to people and then they must do something. The worst thing is if the office does not take action." Office officials need to visit and, then, develop a plan with money to back the plan. Inland towns need help strategizing, especially developing off-season tourism. "I'd welcome the state to shift some of its tourism money to an inland focus," said Simko of Greenville. "Maybe it's not enough to just promote us. We need government officials to come here to spend time to do a state strategic plan to have people come in the off season." Successful field visits should build trust one town at a time through constituency contact. Once the Office of Tourism establishes a rapport with communities and other government agencies, partnerships can be created and can restore pride to downtrodden areas. "We have communities losing their cultures and their insights, and we have nothing to offer them," Jans said. "If there is no sense of pride in a community, then what can that community offer to the tourist?" Listening to these communities can create lasting partnerships.

The office can identify key things in which to invest and to promote. Many applaud Canada's tourist services. Nova Scotia's Cape Breton, for instance, has put itself on the map through music. "In Cape Breton 20 years ago, the music was zero, and now it's world-renowned," Jans said. Relevant to sustainable tourism, Canada has succeeded at attracting guests to its natural resources. "Canada is constantly

advertising,” Walker said, “and it’s ‘come see our natural beauty’ and not promoting Quebec City but their wilderness areas.” More of Maine’s marketing should go toward rural natural resources, according to stakeholders who are agitated that inland areas are overlooked. “There is too much advertising of the coast, like Maine is a strip of land along the coast,” Gilpatrick said. “Our quarter came out with a coastal scene on it. I put in my vote for the one with the canoe in it.” Promotion should go beyond promoting the obvious.

Community plans, as devised by the state, need to start with and address the basics. Rural communities encounter different, and typically more severe, tourism infrastructure needs. Greenville’s Junction Wharf, which is a public boat landing in the West Cove, contains a crumbling retaining wall. A decade ago when the town rebuilt the retaining wall, the town selectmen chose untreated hemlock wood that did not last. The town has received a \$950,000 estimate to repair the wharf. “Now, 10 years later, we have to replace the wall,” Simko said. “We had to remove poor moorings, so someone’s boat doesn’t float away and float into someone else’s boat. ... Infrastructure won’t happen unless someone scrambles around, and what is short, the town will have to make up the difference. You might also have to put in a lesser-quality infrastructure that will remain substandard.” These stakeholders ask the state help pay for the upkeep of quality infrastructure, especially for small inland towns that have minimal funds and more than minimal tourist traffic using their bathrooms and boat ramps.

The Office of Tourism can help communities have access to grant funds from the state and beyond. Communities become part of the left-out phenomenon, often, due to their inability to submit grant proposals. Stakeholders would like to see the state assist community development with staff to write proposals. “The problem with grants is that some communities will have the staff to write grants and some won’t,” Jans said, “so you are leaving out the unorganized communities.” Rural stakeholders complain of unfair financial distributions given to the populated coast where tourism entities are more familiar with the grant application process. Plus, many state grants require a money match that poor rural areas seeking to step into tourism can’t afford. Small entities, such as county offices, often have enlightening tourism development ideas but no money to make them happen. “Piscataquis County came up with a cultural heritage guide,” Simko said, “and there wasn’t any money from the state for that.” Small organizations that apply for money are often turned down, according to stakeholders, when the state budget is tight.

Serving Entrepreneurs and Industry. The Office of Tourism does not provide a welcoming environment for entrepreneurs to be heard, said stakeholders seeking a sounding board. The MTC is meant to be the voice of the private sector through 24 appointed industry stakeholders, but despite its presence, tourism stakeholders find it difficult to be heard by the office. No system exists for on-going private input, and how to develop a system is thought to be difficult, costly and involved. “As for a forum for the public voices to be heard,” said Nathaniel Bowditch, assistant director of the Office of Tourism. “I don’t think it exists in a very complete state.” One stakeholder recalled a curt response from the office to a co-worker proposing an Ice Age geology trail in Downeast Maine. “My colleague went to the Office of Tourism, and the door was completely closed,” Jans said. “There is no forum to be listened to.” Entrepreneurs, seeking financial assistance, have a difficult time getting a hold of government monies. Some blame the DECD for not supporting tourism because DECD disperses all types of economic funding with little going to tourism providers. The Office of Tourism funds available tend to be traditional marketing grant monies, for example. As a result, tourism constituents struggle to apply for DECD development monies that are not tourism focused, like Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money. “The only way we can get CDBG money is by redoing a blighted building,” Tilton said. “If ... there isn’t a resource to go to for tourism development, then why not create a fund that you can go to for that money?” Entrepreneurs look to the office for general business advice, too, on business start-up assistance to day-to-day functions like hiring skilled workers. The office should focus on helping the industry diversify its business services, many said, and broaden its image. Potential agritourism farmers, for example, want to learn how to greet human visitors instead of bovine creatures. The office could be influential in this case through a more comprehensive and interagency focus.

Industry stakeholders ask the state to measure results differently because measuring success by attendance, a traditional method, isn’t effective in places off the beaten track. With existing demand to make tourism stronger, government is not as forgiving of experimental approaches. “I know that the Office of Tourism is feeling pressure to show results,” Tilton said. “... When you do something new for the first time in a rural area, you just aren’t going to get results.” The success of the Downeast Fisheries Trail, for example, has been judged unfairly by low visitor counts when many complexities existed, such as haphazard brochure distribution. Organizers planned to monitor the trail’s popularity through a thank-you

card that visitors could send in, but, ultimately, good plans went astray and the project started to fall apart. The state can serve the industry by taking a broader view of what success is and how to achieve it.

The state should promote the diversity of Maine's tourism by supporting programs that enhance easily overlooked rural opportunities. The industry is not woven together, stakeholders said, in a way that shows how diverse it is, particularly in inland Maine. The Office of Tourism, perhaps, could fund a linkage network that supports individual industry members, such as outfitters, who operate in isolation due to day-to-day survival pressures. Without any linkages, tourists, then, find it difficult to weave guided-experiences together to cover an entire two-week itinerary. In the bigger picture, the Office of Tourism's money could be put toward planning. A plan doesn't exist, from the state level, for example, on how to help most niche recreations, including guides. Sports like ocean fishing are overlooked. "I think tourism people have to go to the Department of Marine Resources ... and say, 'We want to help you get more people,'" said Anderson as the current vice president of the Coastal Conservation Association in Yarmouth and former DOC head. "I don't see the DMR getting into the tourism business, but I don't think it would be wrong." The state should do more to assist the niches, such as what it does to aid snowmobile recreation by organizing clubs and contracting with the Maine Snowmobile Association (MSA) to make and distribute ITS trail maps. The state should promote agritourism, a message heard at annual tourism conferences. The Open Farm Day committee, organized through the state agriculture department, struggles with needed finances to organize an annual agritourism event. "If the state has come forward and said that agriculture is part of tourism," said Gloria Varney, co-owner of Nezinscot Farm in Turner, "then the tourism department needs to help fund it because it benefits everyone." Up to now, agritourism appears to be classified as the responsibility of the state agriculture department. Farmers have become frustrated due to a perceived lack of support. "The state needs to put up or shut up," said Marge Kilkelly, director of the Northeast States Association for Agricultural Stewardship in Dresden. The Office of Tourism can assist the industry by pushing diversification.

Diversifying Office of Tourism Marketing. Marketing must remain a vibrant part of the Office of Tourism's function. The current campaign, "It Must Be Maine," portrays broad experiences with eye-catching photographs that evoke emotion, whether excitement or serenity. Stakeholders have said the state's marketing content, however, does not reflect every corner of Maine. "There is a confused identity on

Maine,” Jans said. “When the Office of Tourism promotes Maine, it’s not where I live at all, which is in Aroostook, the largest county in Maine.” Some marketing is done by the state’s eight formal tourism regions. The Office of Tourism distributes money – approximately \$80,000 annually – to each of the regions for, primarily, marketing. Small communities within these regions do not feel they receive satisfactory answers from those regional officials who control the purse strings. “I asked where that money is spent,” Jans said. “It goes to trade shows and to market hunting and canoeing. There is nothing wrong with that, but it can be very mono-dimensional.” Some stakeholders are bitter about the way the state’s tourism money is distributed. The challenge is to serve regions that encompass huge rural areas made up of small communities with no established tourism threads to one another within a region. Aroostook County, which is designated as one of the regions, finds \$80,000 does not go far on a per-acre basis. “Aroostook County is enormous,” Jans said, “and some areas don’t get any money.” Some communities longing for tourism dollars receive nothing. The Downeast region joins Hancock and Washington counties into one area that favors its big attraction, Acadia National Park, while ignoring many sub-sets like Washington’s sporting camps. Sub-regions should have the right to get money to promote themselves, Tilton said, instead of Bar Harbor garnering most of the marketing dollars for this region. If tourism regions were redrawn, sub-regions could be recognized within the larger rural area. Restructuring by the state would give attention to tourism-hungry sub-regions. Recognizing sub-layers could automatically expand marketing beyond the standard messages, stakeholders said. “Our region isn’t doing this effectively,” Tilton added. “There is not a staff effort, where there is someone there to do all the coordination.” In the Aroostook County region, some communities sought to create an official sub-region in order to spread out potential funds, but this restructuring did not happen.

To monitor its financial distributions, the Office of Tourism oversees project progress and examines results. Some say this gives the state too much influence and regions should decide how to use their allotted money. Money is often dedicated to marketing rather than necessary behind-the-scenes assessments. “That money should be able to be used for planning,” Tilton said, “because there is so much more than doing brochures and putting in ads in ‘Yankee.’” The state could consider distributing funds in new ways beyond dividing amongst the eight regions, such as giving money to associations. Cooperative

funding money, for instance, could benefit the Maine Sporting Camp Association to market family-friendly messages in magazines.

The state oversees www.visitmaine.com as the official tourism Web site of the state of Maine. Some individual entrepreneurs have felt a big pay off from being listed here with a link to their own site. “Let me say that visitmaine.com is probably the most important [page] that there is,” Littlefield said. “It has hot deals, which have been invaluable in this economic climate. We write our own hot deals, for example, ‘Stay two days and get two free.’ If I don’t write good copy, [the office] tells me that it needs to be better.” The state’s site promotes only those that pay to be listed, however. Many entrepreneurs dislike having to pay to be on a state-organized Web site or brochure. Stakeholders ask that the state publish free general promotion, such as directories of museums, because struggling non-profits face large brochure and distribution costs. “Why are we always having to expend the extra effort? Why isn’t the state helping us?” asked Theresa Hoffman, executive director of the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance in Old Town. “The state calls and asks for \$500, and we’ll advertise your gallery. I’m starting to lose hope.” Web advertising is essential but must be affordable.

2. Improve Tourism and Recreation Economic Development Incentive Offerings. *As the second of three sub-goals within clarifying state agency roles, this proposal promotes analyzing present business support and economic development offerings, including how they apply to tourism and recreation business interest needs, as well as offering quality jobs in the tourism sector. Focus is placed on inland Maine, referred to as the Pine Tree Zone.*

Eco-tourism in Maine translates into “eco-nomics” as the industry brings in approximately \$344 million in annual sales tax revenues (Longwoods, 2002). The state needs to provide incentives so its No. 1 industry can generate higher revenues. Tourism stakeholders desire the same funding given to other industries, such as technology and manufacturing. Those industries have long received government monies to establish themselves in rural areas, but tourism has not been given the same treatment. State Rep. Stanley A. Moody (D-Manchester) introduced a January 2005 bill to encourage tourism entrepreneurship in rural areas. The bill, “To Establish the Pine Tree Recreation Zone,” is a response to previous Pine Tree legislation that did not include tourism enterprises in its rural Maine focus. The bill reads: “Recreational

businesses and the areas of the state that they serve are in need of economic support, and providing tax incentives to recreational businesses in rural portions of the state would improve the economic climate of those areas.” Tourism stakeholders ask for loans or tax incentives rather than grants. “It’s money that businesses have to repay but give them a year before they pay it back,” said Tilton, noting that capital is needed. Entrepreneurs need access to infrastructure funding, in particular. “It’s hard to borrow money to build lodging because banks have a lot of this and have high failure rates,” said Matt Polstein, owner of the New England Outdoor Center in Millinocket. “If I were in manufacturing, there are state and federal grants every time I turn around.” The most success might come from reducing everyday entrepreneurial costs for existing businesses. General hindrances include strict zoning regulations, poor roads, few skilled workers and little natural resources protection. Stakeholders offer opinions on how the state can support economic development due to the apparent lack of incentives available. In this section, comments are placed in the following categories: Lessening Regulation Burdens and Offering Incentives to Private Landowners.

Lessening Regulation Burdens. Tourism businesses dislike that tourism’s revenues do not go back into the industry. Entrepreneurs view the meals and lodging tax, requiring tourism businesses to tax their products at a higher rate, as a financial burden. Stakeholders were leery of instituting the seven-percent tax in 2004, possibly scaring away tourists to nearby states free of taxes like New Hampshire. “The food and lodging tax is coming from our guests,” Littlefield said. “We are collecting that, and it affects the price. Taxation of the food and lodging industry is greater than any other business in Maine, yet only a small portion of the revenues generated go back to tourism-related activities.” Perhaps a higher return than the current five percent of the total meals and lodging tax revenues, such as 100 percent of the tax, should be returned to the industry at least in the form of low-interest loans and entrepreneurial training. Out-of-state tourism businesses that operate partially in Maine are not under the same burden to collect and pay Maine taxes. This feels unfair to a Maine windjammer operator, who taxes boat meals that out-of-state boats cruising in the same waters do not have to do. “When all the boats come in from out of state, they don’t pay [taxes],” Files said. “... I’ve called the state to complain that if we have to pay the tax, we want everyone to pay. [The tax] is just the benefit of having ‘Rockland, Maine’ on my stern.” The bottom line is that it is hard to be in business in Maine as businesses face high taxes, insurance and workers’ compensation. Easing business transactions can be accomplished through lessening regulatory measures.

Entrepreneurs must overcome a large number of state regulations regarding land use that address where and how they operate. Zoning is one of the biggest issues for a rural state like Maine with little consistency from one town to the next. State government needs to be the one to guide growth, dealing with sprawl. “We give control to towns to control land use so we get 500 towns doing 500 different things,” said Jym St. Pierre, Maine director of RESTORE: The North Woods based in Hallowell. “You can have development and maintain the scenic attractiveness.” Concerned with land use on a wider scale is the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC), assisting potential tourism entrepreneurs in Maine’s unorganized territories that make up half the state’s acreage. LURC, as a planning and zoning board, approves access to businesses like sporting camps where they would not be able legally to operate. “We have specifically written rules to try to continue the tradition of Maine sporting camps,” said Wight, a LURC commissioner who has served under various governors. “There is recognition that their guests need access but not congestion. You try to allow them to be separated from other uses.” Although helpful, LURC has frustrated some tourism operators, such as rafting company owners, looking to change zoning regulations in unorganized territories so that they can locate there.

Today’s tourism threats come from a seemingly non-tourism issue: increasing land taxes that affect if landowners can continue to own and to open the land to recreationists. Ensuring access to private land must occur. In Maine, this private assurance might be more important than the exact percentage of public land operated by the state. Mainers depend greatly on agricultural landowners, for example, to allow the public to visit their vast tracts. Farmers will not be able to stay in business, protecting large unbroken parcels of the Maine landscape, unless a fair current-use tax system is put in place. “Give farmers a break through current-use taxes,” Varney said. “For every piece of land that we own, we are taxed as if there is a house lot there. We have eight parcels and are taxed as if we have the potential for eight house lots. So, our taxes are continually going up.” Agriculture and woodlot landowners argue that they pay high taxes for town services they never get. “For every dollar we pay in taxes, we get 37 cents from the town,” Varney added. “For every \$1 a resident pays, they get \$1.60 in town service.” A tax argument could be made for all working land: agricultural, forest and waterfront. The state could implement a tiered-tax system where working land is taxed at a lower rate than the typical parcel because taxes have increased to the point that farmers and waterfront businesses, especially, can no longer afford to operate. To address this, on a 2005

ballot, the public passed an amendment to the Constitution of Maine authorizing the legislature to assess waterfront land used for commercial fishing activities by the land's current use.

Offering Incentives to Private Landowners. The state must foster good will between landowners and recreationists, who benefit from access that easily can be cut off through "No Trespass" signs. Recreationists understand the importance of the relationship. Thousands of snowmobilers, for instance, have developed a rapport with landowners to have a place to ride. Historically, the state had worked with landowners to serve recreationists. The forest service built campsites on private land in the '60s that government maintained into the '90s. Budget problems in the late '90s changed the situation. "The state said, 'We can no longer afford to maintain it, and we will turn it over to you,'" Donovan said. "The cost to keep up campgrounds is \$12,000 a year for International Paper. To support hunting and fishing and other interests, it costs tens of thousands of dollars." The state has to recognize this cost to the landowner to allow recreationists on private land. "The state has to mitigate that [cost]," said Bob Meyers, executive director of the Maine Snowmobile Association in Augusta. Willingness of landowners might come today with a price tag attached. Landowners have not sought to be in the recreation business, they said, because there is no money in it. The North Maine Woods Inc., which represents foresters' interests, barely makes it financially. "The state promotes tourism," Donovan said, "yet it has not provided any incentives for forestland owners to develop recreation."

Incentives should be used rather than state legislation that forces cooperation. Landowners request state assistance with basic infrastructure, like roads or privies, instead of cold cash. "Many of the scenic outlooks are owned privately without any privies to the parking area," Donovan said. "The wisdom of the legislature and the state government offers no incentives to provide privies." Vocal parties feel the state should contribute management over money. Managerial actions, specifically, include building and maintaining campsites and trails for tourism. "It's bad [for the state] to give money to private landowners," said Dave Field, Ph. D., chair of the University of Maine's Department of Forest Management with positions with the Appalachian Trail Conference and the Maine Appalachian Trail Club. "A win-win is the opportunity for state agencies with cooperation from landowners to take over management of some of those lands." Maine can take lessons on incentive programs from other states. Michigan and Wisconsin give landowners allowing recreational access a tax break through a rate reduction per acre of commercial

forestland. The West, according to stakeholders, serves as a possible model, too, where farms receive tax credits for allowing hunters. “Landowners put up a big sign, and guides go and put your license number in there,” Libby said, “and at the end of the year, the landowner turns in that list and gets credit for the number of hunters he allows on his land for a tax credit.” Landowners, if given the chance, might respond to incentives from financial aid to management assistance to tax credits to infrastructure and staffing.

The largest problem: Money does not exist to fund tourism incentives in Maine. If more dedicated-funding programs existed, incentives like state-built infrastructure could be offered. One Maine recreation niche, snowmobiling, has had success due to a developed funding formula. Funded by a portion of the gas tax and registration fee, snowmobiling receives more than \$1 million annually from the DOC. This niche operates under a successful small-scale model management strategy, even though more money would be welcome. “There is a \$60 out-of-state trail fee with a small portion going to trail maintenance,” Fichtner said. “Based on the number of ‘x’ registrations, we get ‘x’ number of dollars.” More programs to guarantee recreational funding are needed.

The option exists to ask the public to pay a fee to use private land, as many stakeholders suggested. This could empower landowners to ask the public to benefit financially, especially if charging for lands that offer interpretation and privies. Landowners would like the state to support them to charge for recreational use. If anyone opposes paying a fee, the state could, and perhaps should, back the landowners’ right to charge. “In the West, you often pay to use public land,” said the Kevin Boyle, Ph.D., with the University of Maine’s Resource Economics and Policy department. “We need the right mix: public and private with access and pay.” One stakeholder, while in Oregon, recalled paying a timber company to be on private land. “We drove up a paved forest road with interpretation signs and a privy,” Field said. “It was an experimental fee program where visitors were asked to put money in the slot, which is a gradual beginning of charging for recreation. In my judgment, people would have no problem with it.” Paying to visit a location, whether private or public, is an idea most interviewees supported. A few did not agree with paying to enter land overseen by the North Maine Woods Inc. Complaints exist that the non-profit’s fees for managing private land are too expensive at \$5 per resident day use and \$6 per person camping fees totaling \$11 per person per day. Visitors staying in sporting camps that fall within the North Maine Woods boundary especially protest the gate fee. Lack of public support frustrates the non-profit’s staff. “The state

has a vocal minority who think that state land and our [private] land should be free,” said Albro Cowperthwaite, executive director of the non-profit North Maine Woods Inc. headquartered in Ashland. The North Maine Woods defends its fees to seek funds to keep up the infrastructure that pays for picnic tables and cleaning outhouses.

3. Coordinate Recreational Land Management, Utilization and Promotion. *This is the third of three Blaine House sub-goals within clarifying state agency roles and responsibilities. The conference proposed convening a task force, overseen by the State Planning Office (SPO), of public and private land trust interests, including parks and public lands, to put in place a comprehensive conserved land database of present and proposed holdings. In addition, the conference seeks to convene a representative body of conserved land interests, private land interests and recreational interests for the purpose of reconciling a land-management directive that reflects the need for industry open land and public access as well as maintaining sustainability of the natural resources. Also, the conference supports Land for Maine’s Future (LMF) linkages between existing holdings and proposed acquisitions.*

This study’s 43 stakeholders spoke more frequently on land use than any other topic. Central to Maine’s public access to private land is the Great Ponds law, a mid-1600s colonial ordinance, giving every citizen a right to access a great pond, defined as 10 acres or larger, to shoot birds or fish for food. Access, today, must be addressed before the industry can grow socially, economically and ecologically. Nature-based tourism occurs on a wide Maine landscape – 3,500 miles of rugged shoreline as part of the state’s 19.75 million acres. Approximately 6.75 percent of Maine’s land is public, equating to 1.25 million acres of conservation land and 120,000 acres of easements. DOC oversees 47 parks and historic sites and more than 480,000 acres of public reserved lands. Maine land trusts hold 306,000 acres of conservation land in fee and 1 million acres in easements. The state-run Land for Maine’s Future program oversees 192,000 acres in 115 projects at 85 locations in 16 counties through fee or easement for \$85 million (LMF, 2004). Not all state land serves recreational interests, however. “[Mainers] own a half million acres of state land that people do not know where it is,” St. Pierre said, “possibly because it’s land used for timber production and there’s not much there to promote recreation uses.” Agencies that govern the state’s land – DOC, IF&W and SPO – might benefit from being housed together to allow them to produce one complete list of parcels.

In this section, land-use comments are placed in the following categories: Explaining Land-Use Alternatives; Using Land for Single- or Multi-Use Recreation; and Including a Second National Park in Maine's Landscape.

Explaining Land-Use Alternatives. Since the Blaine House conference, diverse government agencies have become receptive to tourism, yet confusion remains amongst those that address land use. In this study, two messages can be heard regarding land use. First, LURC, which has overseen development in the unorganized territories since the '70s, has not consistently supported tourism business development. "We felt that LURC was not attuned to our [alpine ski resort] needs," Sweetser said, "and we had an adversarial relationship with the state." The new Pine Tree Zone legislation, perhaps, will assist to set this straight. Second, the SPO should take on a larger role with land-use decisions, as it has done with the state's coastal policy and through its LMF program. The SPO can serve as a leader between agencies and private groups. The state deserves credit for efforts to talk with constituencies, including landowners. The governor created the 21-member Task Force on Traditional Uses and Public Access to Land in Maine in 2004 (<http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/index.php?topic=Gov+News&id=3398&v=Article>). The group, which includes small and large landowners, analyzes the best ways to access land for traditional uses in the face of changes in land ownership patterns during the past decade. Plus, the Sportsman/Forest Landowner Alliance is an ongoing contact for agencies, including the Office of Tourism, to hear forest landowners concerns, partly do they don't end up in the legislature. Maine's proud land-use history of open access has evolved, however, into a messy saga lacking stewardship, from torn-up trails to left-behind trash. Gaining access to private land, therefore, can be quite tedious as towns must ask each landowner's formal permission to create paths on their land for recreational use. Some landowners do not respond kindly to the request for public access to their private land. "You are talking to dozens of landowners," said Simko from his town manager viewpoint. "Some might say, 'Why would I want to give these [easements] because it might lower my property value?' or 'I just don't like snowmobiles.'" Within this dialogue, it's clear that land use is complicated, needing more explanation.

Utilizing State and Federal Land. Mainers agree on the need for additional public land even though debate exists on location – inland or coast. "The concern should be that Maine ranks last in public ownership of coastal land on the East coast," said Field, who indicated coastal land acquisitions are

more urgent than inland properties. Despite this general agreement to add public land, many stakeholders place emphasis on doing more with what the state currently owns. Maine's small amount of public land has a lot to offer ecologically. Tourists don't seem to know this, however, as they overlook the state's million-acre backyard as a place to recreate. If more publicity of public lands occurred, this mentality could change, according to stakeholders. The state should show off what it has, especially in lesser-known inland areas. Sugar Island, the largest state-owned inland island, is found in Moosehead Lake. "I think the state is in a hard way when trying to encourage recreation on private land when we haven't done much on land that we own," Anderson said. "In the north, one of great opportunities is the public lands we already own." Promoting underutilized state parks could be a way to put the 47 parks on people's radar. "The Department of Conservation has a reservation system, but they don't promote the lands," Anderson said. "No one is trying to find people to come to the state parks." Parks need well-marked trails, sanitary facilities, camping and lodging sites nearby with natural buffer zones between them and commercial sites. To put attention on parks, stakeholders suggested expanding existing state parks or adding more parks in strategically located spots. Swan Lake in Waldo County is the most recent park built in 1980. Parks need to be recognized for serving both in- and out-of-state visitors. "[State parks] are one of the resources that the state is particularly known for," Sochasky said. "We need to better recognize their value." Stakeholders feel the SPO, DOC and the Office of Tourism should partner to utilize existing public land better. Joint efforts can do more with existing natural resources.

If promotion is heightened, Maine's properties will need stronger recreation management strategies to satisfy recreationists. Funding woes, frequently in the news, hinder state park managers from making these sites all they can be. The state must operate parks with uncertain income streams gathered from fees of loon conservation license plates and royalties on water pumped by Poland Spring under state land. Some in the tourism field ask what happens to the revenue because state parks operate often on funds they raise. Poor funding perpetuates limited management of existing and new state lands. The state buys more land, through bond issues, without putting the related resources in place. "They are buying the land," Cowperthwaite said, "but there is no management strategy. They are cutting the BPL staff but not thinking of management. They need adequate staff." Until management and funding increase, promotion of lands

should be done cautiously to not encourage tourists to come to sites that can be damaged from overuse and insufficient infrastructure.

Federal land should be viewed as a part of what Maine, and its tourism industry, has to offer. These lands are not given attention often from the state even though federal parcels make up thousands of acres, including Acadia's 45,000 acres and the Appalachian Trail's approximately 30,000-acre Maine corridor plus a portion of the White Mountain National Forest and several U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuges. The state can best support its federal properties by caring for the landscape around it. This has not happened in other states, like New Hampshire where the congested southern gateway to the White Mountains are avoided by some travelers. Similar congestion concerns exist in Maine for the roadway leading from Ellsworth to Acadia in Bar Harbor. The responsibility for this path goes beyond the National Park Service if for no other reason than the road occurs outside the park. "Taking care of this natural park [Acadia] is of interest to the state because it serves so many tourists, and the state has control of everything geographically around it," said Ken Olson, president of Friends of Acadia in Bar Harbor. "You have to ask what the experience is that you want people to have – sprawl or a pleasant gateway." The state can show more concern for its federal lands and their potential to enhance a wide area's economic development.

Addressing Infrastructure on Maine's Lands. Insufficient infrastructure must be analyzed on Maine's recreational lands. Roads are core to the infrastructure argument because accessibility occurs only if visitors can physically travel to the recreation parcels. This requires improved quality of existing roads and the creation of new roads. Poor road maintenance on state and private land threatens tourism's future. Some public lands are inaccessible, especially on coastal parcels, without decent roads. For private lands, the state must help landowners oversee the availability and quality of roads. "We rank dead last in the country on the number of miles of public roads per acre of private forest land," Field said. "In effect, Maine provides less public road access to private forest lands than does any other state. The fact that Maine's timberland is 96 percent privately owned has as much to do with this as do the miles of public road." Roads, like other infrastructure, are a necessary evil in need of constant attention.

Lacking a general strategy for the built environment, stakeholders said, troubles them. "We have no mechanism, policy or incentives that create a destination infrastructure, even if primitive, and have it managed," IP's Donovan said. Certain state departments, such as DOC, better address infrastructure like

signage than others, such as IF&W. Management, combined with poor infrastructure, has become so minimal, especially on private land, that visitors often do not have a quality experience. “Some tourists with negative experiences will not want to return,” IP’s Swanton said. “Campgrounds became so uncontrolled in the past without management that families didn’t want to come back.” The state should build simple infrastructure like bird-viewing blinds even during tight budget times because infrastructure on private or public lands clearly affects the overall experience.

The high level of recreation on private land complicates the infrastructure dilemma. If the state or an organization invests in new infrastructure like roads or trails on private land, the fear is landowners could put investments at risk later by refusing public access or restricting the types of recreationists allowed. The Western Mountains Foundation, which is designing a 180-mile hut-to-hut corridor to cross 14 landowners through Maine, has thought through the need to be welcomed by owners on a long-term basis. “We plan to put in such a significant investment in this trail project that it can’t be relocated every year,” said Larry Warren, president of the Western Mountains Foundation creating the Mahoosucs-Moosehead trail. “We have to make sure that it remains for multi-generational use.” The Maine snowmobile industry, historically, has built its trails without a formal agreement but rather with a solid handshake with landowners. Members frequently have had to relocate trails that are in conflict with land uses, whether timber harvesting or agriculture. Without hesitation, the MSA demonstrates its willingness to re-route trails to maintain the good rapport. “We listen to what the landowner says,” Meyers said. “When there is logging going on, the clubs will reroute.” The result is positive, too, with low fatality rates on certified trails. The association has found that cooperating with landowners can prevent or quickly solve conflicts that jeopardize infrastructure.

Infrastructure can be a tool to educate visitors while protecting the land. Signage on aesthetic boardwalks, for instance, educates tourists while raising human footsteps above the fragile resource below. An Audubon nature site in Naples, Fla., has been designed with infrastructure to withstand impact. “Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary handled a relatively sensitive area with a four-mile boardwalk, and it took the pressure off the environment and allowed people to visit the area,” Walker said. “This needs to happen with state parks and whoever the property owners are.” A minimal level of infrastructure should exist to sustain the resource.

For those locations that receive many visitors, infrastructure should be added in the surrounding area to alleviate pressure on the resource. Land managers in these locations cry for help from towns officials to relieve the demand. Building infrastructure outside a park, instead of inside, can be the solution to give needed things-to-do options in the larger area. Millinocket, which sits outside the heavily-visited Baxter State Park, should add tourist options and assess its lost assets – like the now-defunct Millinocket Lake boat rides. “I advocate that the tourism council and the state look at ways that they can take care of people without totaling relying on Baxter State Park,” said Irvin Caverly, director of the park. The failure of town leaders to act on proposed tourism-building ideas – like a trolley – has frustrated some locals.

Questioning Additional Land Acquisitions. Maine, with only 6.75 percent of public land, ranks well below the national per state average. According to a National Wilderness Institute report, Maine ranks 37th with Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas in the last positions respectively (Natural Resources Council of Maine, 1995). Maine’s low percentage has led groups to forecast Maine’s privately and publicly owned landscape. The Future of Forestland Ownership in Maine, a 17-member panel including Field, predicted the northern eight Maine counties to remain in private hands with public ownership only increasing from 6 percent to 8 percent by the year 2020. Specifically, the group’s study, authored by Husson College President William Beardsley, said 90 percent of the approximately 16 million acres of forest will remain private (Tuttle, 2003). Some Mainers, in and outside of government, ask themselves if a small increase in public land will be enough.

Few interviewees were outright against adding any public lands. Those pushing for more public land include representatives of RESTORE: The North Woods, which has proposed a second national park in Maine. “We could expand public ownership of and publicity about lands of statewide significance,” St. Pierre said. “And we could broaden programs that fund protection of lands of regional and local significance by communities and land trusts.” The few pushing against adding land are private landowner representatives who believe the state cannot afford additional lands. Money saved from buying land, they said, could be used to manage existing state land. “Maine has a small population,” Donovan said. “There is no way that we can afford to manage a huge percentage of public land.” Most Mainers fall somewhere in the middle on the land debate, recognizing the value of adding more public land to support recreation opportunities while worrying that too much land, as in other parts of the country, could be locked up. “In

the Western U.S., there is way too much public land,” Boyle said. “There, the marginal value of public land is low. In Maine, the value of adding more public land can be pretty high.” Adding land, therefore, is believed to be a way to capture more nature-based recreation opportunities.

When looking at the facts, increased acquisitions do not appear logical. Failings, especially of land management, indicate caution because not all state land acquisitions include funding for management. Before any land purchase is completed, management levels should be considered. “Initially the idea was to put your money into acquisition and let stewardship happen later in the future, but now that has changed – that need to manage,” said Jane Arbuckle, director of stewardship at the Maine Coast Heritage Trust in Brunswick. “There’s a big concern with the push for tourism. Don’t push tourism until you push for funds of lands that tourists are going to.” Those in government recognize the buying-without-management pattern. LMF should revise its initial goal from acquiring land to creating recreation options. When the program started in the mid-’80s, money could only be used to acquire, not to manage, but times have changed. “We have spent a lot of money buying land and not any managing it,” said Anderson, referring to the initial \$50 million bond issue. “The Land for Maine’s Future should be more focused on recreation opportunities. We are more concerned about rare plants than recreation. I think this is ridiculous.” As Maine increases its percent of public land, recreation management should be part of the foundation.

Choosing Fee or Easement Acquisition. Should Maine add to its public land through fee or easement acquisition? In the first case, the state owns the property outright, and in the second case, the state only owns the development rights. The reality is that Maine, through the LMF program, has been increasing its easements. The use of easement vs. fee-based lands has tripled in the past five years. Until the Naticous Lake Project in 2000, less than 10 percent of LMF conservation projects were protected by easements. Now, 30 percent of LMF lands are conservation easements, and that fraction is expected to increase (LMF, 2004). This emphasis in easements by private land trusts and the state has led to public access confusion because few conserved lands have recreation plans, especially for the mass public like tourists, and easement purchases do not encourage public access. Today, LMF requires acquisition contracts to include public access clauses, but many stakeholders said the program does not provide sufficiently for elements beyond purchasing the land. This has been recognized, and to offset it, Gov. John Baldacci has proposed additional LMF funds several times. (In 2004, he proposed \$60 million to continue

the program, including an additional \$5 million for BPL to fund state park infrastructure, but the proposal was never placed on the ballot. A year later, in 2005, a proposal for a \$12 million bond issue – to be matched by at least \$7 million in private and public contributions – made the ballot and passed.) Money will be used to purchase fee and easement parcels statewide from willing sellers for conservation, water access, wildlife and fish habitat, outdoor recreation, farmland preservation and working waterfront preservation.

Pro easement: Some would like to see a friendlier atmosphere toward easements because limited funds can purchase “more” when the purchase is only of the development rights rather than the entire property. In addition, easements can protect trail and recreational infrastructure to remain for public use in case land is ever sold. Easements ensure that future generations of owners will not be able to sell the land to someone who could develop it. Plus, the forest landowner who would typically have to cut more and more wood to pay off a debt will not have to now due to the additional funds from selling an easement. In this way, conserved lands, especially easements, assist Maine in keeping its wild image. “Easements allow us to retain the wilderness values,” Caverly said. Easements are a better option, some believe, than outright private land sales that could lead to open access areas being cut off or subdivided. The sale of townships on the east side of Baxter State Park – referring to adjacent lands bought by millionaire Roxanne Quimby – worries some people that access might end.

Con easement: Stakeholders see fee acquisition as more logical long term because heavily used lands need a high level of management, and easement acquisition does not provide for this level. The general thinking: What you own, you can control. “If it’s going to be a spot that will have a lot of use,” Arbuckle said, “then fee acquisition will be a better option than easement because we can’t ask the private owner to manage it.” Easements do not guarantee public access unless stated as part of the contract, and some landowners seek to avoid the hassles of sharing their property. Overall, easements might not be the right tool for sellers unaware of increased traffic that might result. “The original intent of easements, when legislation passed, was not recreation but to preserve for other reasons,” Arbuckle said. “We’re now asking if they are the right tool because of a burden on private landowner to have public access over time. Many landowners might write in an easement contract to allow public access because they think of the neighborhood’s desire to walk down to the beach. They are not thinking that [the location] can get on the

Internet and bring all sorts of people.” Some fear the state has no easement management plan, thereby making such land designations a poor choice. Easements could take away from tourism experiences due to a lack of infrastructure, including interpretation and lodging. “With the changing patterns in land ownership,” Polstein said, “I’m worried that all that conservation easements will create is an environment in which you can come and have a non-supportive experience that is not very economically viable.” Easements are not shaped for tourism because infrastructure is not allowed in many cases. “I don’t see a strong link between tourism and conservation easements,” Owen said. “Facilities are not available, and many conservation easements preclude infrastructure.” Easements, by definition, remain in private hands; therefore, giving the state less control of signage and other infrastructure enhancements. Recreationists typically need signage and an introduction to an area they visit.

Those against easements, although in the minority, speak loudly. Easements are attractive to foresters but do not protect wilderness, they claimed. After an area is timbered, it is often sold as an easement to a conservation group willing to buy a “desert” so that it can regenerate itself. Maine residents should be able to question easements bought with public dollars, including forest practices on that land. “If the easement is bought with state or public money, such as one by LMF, there is a legitimate question of what does the easement say,” said Thomas Urquhart, partner in Urquhart & Spritz consulting firm in Portland. “It needs to be very clear as to why we’ve bought that easement, and it should say something about forest practices.” Others have the same forest practice concerns. “Conservation easements are a great positive step of buying development rights to make sure that it doesn’t get developed even though it allows it to be continually raped by the timber companies,” Conover said. One of the most significant points against easements is they are not enough to attract tourists because they do not present a vivid map destination nor can they substitute for a recreation area. “The large-scale working forest easements are not a national park,” St. Pierre said. “If your goal is to attract tourism, you’re not going to accomplish that with easements to create little eco-reserves.” These stakeholders feel easements are not bad, but they are not good enough.

Crafting Management Strategies. Up to now, low management has been sufficient, but as public use increases, management needs to increase. “Maine is kind of the way that Massachusetts was 30 years ago,” Arbuckle said. “Thirty years ago, we just needed someone to manage the trails, and now we

need someone on site all the time.” With more tourists at more resource locations, who is there to greet, inform and then manage the people? Perhaps no one. This scares some land managers who rather not see tourism grow until the industry is ready to address related issues. Any strategy demands money and staff, which the state lacks, to protect its holdings. Money garnered from timbering on public reserved lands could pay for more recreation specialists to manage all of the public lands. Impairment will happen, stakeholders warned, unless management efforts occur to protect the land for future generations.

Weak management leads to misuse, as case after case shows. One natural resource area that has operated with too few managers is the Appalachian Trail. The trail has only two rangers due to low management funds, said Field, who is chair emeritus of the Board of Managers of the Appalachian Trail Conference and overseer of lands for the Maine Appalachian Trail Club. These two officers, who are not based in the state, are to control trail abuses here and beyond. This is not a realistic, or a sustainable, option. In cases with lacking staff resources, management duties consequently focus on negative uses. Donnell Pond, a 14,000-acre area that is one of the state’s 29 public reserved lands, has had its share of trouble. “There is no check site,” Cowperthwaite said. “They have the warden there to break up fights, and they depend on law enforcement just to keep the peace and make sure people are behaving. This can be costly because it’s expensive to add staff to do this.” Maine doesn’t have a choice but to assess and increase its management to offer quality experiences free of negative uses.

Ideally, multiple partners – with the state as one – can band together to oversee specific recreational lands, but actions can conflict if partners aren’t in sync. The state, in one instance, put up signs to a Washington County conserved area without first consulting the resource manager. “The state put in a trail and a kiosk,” Arbuckle added. “Suddenly there were signs on the roadway for getting there, and the resource manager hadn’t been notified of the signage before more people started coming.” In this situation, private organizations had put in more money than the state to conserve the area. Because the state paid for only a quarter of acquisition, should it control management decisions? Some said no. “With every Land For Maine’s Future deal, the state requires public access, so if the state puts in one-fourth of the funds, that’s great,” Arbuckle said, “but I don’t know if it gives the state the right to expect control over management decision in perpetuity.” As more land is managed through partnerships, appropriate sharing of power and decision-making will need to occur. Stakeholders fear promotion efforts complicate lacking management

funds. Some of the scenic lands the state promotes are operated by land trusts. One interviewee suggested the state not market lands it does not manage or own because management might not be at a sufficient level to handle visitation. “The state appears to be publicizing and pushing certain activities and resources more than they have in the past. That pushing is inappropriate because the state is not in touch with the resource owners and managers,” Arbuckle said. Recreationists will only leave as happy campers if a full management plan appropriately protects the landscape they’ve come to see.

Finally, throughout history, the state has been given land by well-endowed conservationists wanting it to be preserved for perpetuity. The state pays nothing for these donated parcels, but limited finances result in the state failing to manage the land. Many would like to see the state preserve the land with the pride in which it was given by funding proper care instead of forcing parks to raise their own funds to survive. Holbrook Island Sanctuary in Harbourside, for example, has had to gather its own management dollars. “Anita Harris [former Harbourside resident] bought up all those dilapidated summer homes, and her legacy is a park,” Littlefield said. “Maine must ensure that donated areas will indeed be preserved as directed.” Land acquired either through fee or donation means nothing without appropriate long-term management as part of the deal.

Using Land for Single- or Multi-Use Recreation. Maine operates at a multi-use level, unlike states that designate specific parcels for specific recreations, especially for motorized and non-motorized forms. Concern exists regarding recreationists overlapping in often-unfriendly ways. Use of the same land parcels, whether public or private, leads to friction on and off the trail. Stakeholders argue that not every land acquisition should be multi-use because some acquisitions are only suitable for one purpose. “The multiple-use concept is good if you look at the whole portfolio,” Arbuckle said. “Some land might be suitable for an ATV trek, some for a certain type of hunting, some for just day-use.” Stakeholders seek a land management system allowing affected parties to be involved in discussions and documentation.

State Listening to Motorized Users. Augusta can listen and respond to all recreationists, one stakeholder said, rather than supporting multi-use recreationists and ignoring quiet recreationists. “Roads, motors and unlimited access anywhere by anyone is what gets listened to in Augusta,” Conover said. “The motor people have huge economic clout by the sheer numbers, and they are not bothered by anything. If a canoeist wants a 10-mile stretch of the Allagash, you’d have a fight for 10 years, but if a

motorboat person wants access to a puddle, they'd put in a ramp for them." The state can improve recreation land management for non-motorized uses, said stakeholders representing hiking, biking and canoeing activities. Attempts by individual stakeholders to better non-motorized recreational management have led to frustrating results with little interest by the state. "I've tried to have some state-owned land trails closed to have foot traffic only," said Jeff McEvoy, owner of Weatherby's inn in Grand Lake Stream. "Again, it has fallen on deaf ears even on the state level." The state needs to be proactive in managing for motorized uses in certain areas and accommodating non-motorized uses. "I think it can be done effectively if people are willing to put the energy into it and be flexible," he said. Motorized recreationists receive political advantages, many interviewees stated, in part because they are believed to spend more money than non-motorized recreationists on purchases such as gas and lodging. Motorized recreationists have better access to funding, too, due to government's assistance. "Historically, the motorized users have been looking toward the registration fee and the percentage of the gas tax to be reinvested in creating trail corridors," Warren said. "It's been easier for BPL to accommodate the interests of motorized users because it comes with a dedicated funding source. No one to date has created a fund from canoes, kayaks or other sporting goods for funding use." Motorized users have funding sources that give them more recognition, whether intentional or not.

Analyzing Multiple-use Recreation Conflicts. Not all recreation forms mix in a peaceful manner. Many states have learned that recreationists do not like to share space. Non-motorized recreationists in Colorado have avoided 10th Mountain Division trails, primarily logging trails, in the winter because snowmobilers use them. Belief exists that quality lessens within a multi-recreational environment. "Quiet users don't mind sharing with other quiet users," Conover said. "If [the lake] is full of other canoeists, it's fun. If it's full of rowdy motorboat users, it's not." Multi-recreation can lessen quality and lead to tension between users. Minnesota has been able to operate on a friendlier basis between recreationists. "In Ely, Minn., it was fun to be in a local pub and cheek-to-jowl next to a snowmobiler," said Conover, a quiet recreationist. "In Maine, that would never be friendly because people are competing with each other for the same land." Competing recreational uses could lead to a decline in Maine's historic recreational options, including Nordic skiing or dog mushing. "I am afraid we are going to lose some of those special experiences that Maine is known for," said Gabrielle Kissinger, the northern regional

conservation director of the Appalachian Mountain Club. “Really we need to ask how the different uses can be accommodated so that it doesn’t compromise the experience.” Sharing between recreational users is difficult to do successfully. Conflicts occur even within a single recreation form, such as Maine canoeists who argue about the number of access points needed in the Allagash depending on if they are single- or multi-day recreationists. Non-motorized recreationists oppose the noise of motorized recreation. To emphasize how loud it can be, Conover crafted a scheme approximately five years ago to let politicians hear the noise level and hope they would be as disturbed as he had been. “We were going to rent Jet Skis and have kids run up and down the salmon run on the West Branch,” said Conover, referring to the plan he and his wife, Alexandra, designed for a location where many politicians fly fish. “We were also going to park in front of the Capitol and play Jet Ski noise from the car at an accurate level to let the Augusta people hear what it’s like. That would be as good as setting the Capitol on fire.” Since this time, these waters in the unorganized territories no longer allow Jet Ski motorboats. With a resolution found, the couple never executed its original plans.

With such a large state landscape, more thought should be given to separate areas for specific recreational opportunities. Many stakeholders feel single-use recreation is doable by sectioning out areas for different users. “There is plenty of room in Maine for everyone to do everything but not all at the same place and at the same time,” said Wight, who opposes random use of motorized vehicles. Some entrepreneurs depend on certain conditions to operate their businesses. Conover, for his guiding business, voices the need for quiet recreation areas. In the summer, he has been challenged to find motor-free waters capable of providing multi-day canoe trips. He operates five-day trips on only three waterways: the Allagash, the St. John and the West Branch. In the winter, he snowshoes in the same areas but has eliminated the lower Allagash River due to too many snowmobilers. “There needs to be targeting of habitat for different users and a place to deliver what those users want,” Conover said. “There will not be a significant loss of habitat for the motor people. So what if they lose one key river? Quiet users don’t have many rivers in the first place. We need motor limitations with teeth in them, so we segregate user groups so both groups give something up. ... I am very happy to go elsewhere, but I’m not happy when the whole river is taken up.” Designations for separate areas in which to recreate might lessen the combative tone in Maine tourism.

Discussing single- or multi-use recreation addresses not only which recreation forms are appropriate but also what types of recreational skill levels are suited for an area. Stakeholders believe different skill levels can be served best on different land parcels because some tourists want easy access that's not physically challenging while others want remote access that's greatly challenging. Many entrepreneurs are against too much access because their clients want solitude. "We say on the Allagash," Gilpatrick said, "that the Allagash can't be everything for everybody." Often, inland Mainers want to limit roads because they see roads as preventing a true wilderness. "Thirty years ago, there were lakes that it would take us a full day to get into. Now, you can drive up there this morning and go home at night," he added. "You can't maintain a wilderness if you have this kind of access." The Appalachian Trail's so-called 100-mile wilderness stretch from Monson to Abol Bridge incorporates plenty of private logging roads. Access points throughout the state, stakeholders said, need to be kept to a minimum. Inland Mainers want recreationists to visit who are experienced and self-sufficient. "For a canned walk, go to Acadia," Medina said. The tourism industry can benefit by identifying various areas for various skill levels.

Being Skeptical of Single-Use Recreation. While a few stakeholders see value in single-use recreational designations, especially for the non-motorized, others bristle at the notion. These stakeholders include landowners who want their land to serve all types of natural resource needs and recreationists. "I don't like to see groups form that are on a preservation bent – groups that want to have land protected for their own use," said Medina of Seven Islands. "We've got the harvesting and the recreational use, and we just need to talk [with recreationists]." Landowners see single-use recreation proponents as politically oriented with the desire to modify the landscape. The Maine North Woods Inc. has faced a lot of backlash that questions its forestry stewardship. "People who are into ecology would go to a wilderness but not to a working forest ... if they would have to pay for that," said Cowperthwaite, referring to the fee charged by the non-profit to give recreationists access to the working forest. Bear hunters, he said, bring a different point of view than hikers into the forest. "I would invite 100 people [to the working forest] who bear hunt because they would be happy there and pay willingly. If I had 100 hikers, they would be highly educated, wealthy and know how to change the system politically. I prefer to have someone visit who would be very satisfied than to have people come up and see it and try to go back and change it." Landowners do not trust single-use recreationists because they could lean toward exclusive

use. Multi-use recreationists do not trust single-use recreationists because they believe they will be asked to stop certain practices, such as the use of motors on trails and lakes. Access to private land, one would think, would be more difficult than to public land, but ironically, motorized users find the opposite to be true. “Every time you have public land,” Meyers said, “there can be one portion of the public who voices how you should not use that land.” Motorized recreationists gain access more easily to private land because public land can skew to single or non-motorized use.

Some multi-use recreationists, realizing their actions can negatively impact others, have taken proactive steps. The MSA asks snowmobile members to follow an informal ethic of sorts to tolerate other recreationists and act responsibly. “There is a responsibility that we have when we are out there with people not snowmobiling,” Meyers said. “Non-motorized people have a responsibility, too.” Frustration sets in for MSA members when they hear non-motorized recreationists complain of encountering snowmobiles on MSA-developed trails. MSA members do not mind sharing the trails but want credit and respect for building the trails. “Just because it snows doesn’t mean that these trails will magically appear. Volunteers do this,” Meyers said. “Cross-country skiers and dog sledders use the trails even though they are not getting the permission.” If expectations are established beforehand, multi-use recreational sites might be conducive for all recreationists.

Hesitant to partake in recreational discussions are some environmental organizations, turning away because they feel those conversations would attempt to foster multi-use recreation. The Friends of Bigelow, connected to the Bigelow State Preserve, have discouraged the Western Mountains Foundation’s proposed 180-mile trail to cross the preserve because they do not want to accommodate a variety of uses on this public land. The friends group is against motorized recreation within the preserve’s boundaries, even for trail management purposes. “It irks me that the Friends of Bigelow forced [the Western Mountains Foundation] to look to neighboring private lands because of the notion cross-country ski trail grooming isn’t appropriate in the Bigelow unit and because trails will foster too much public use,” Medina said. “In my opinion, if public use isn’t appropriate on public land, why is it appropriate on private land? Certainly all uses and all intensities are not appropriate in all areas, but I think it’s absurd that there isn’t opportunity for another foot trail in the Bigelow forest.” The “use” concept should be examined because public land implies the location would serve anyone in the public realm.

Including a Second National Park in Maine's Landscape. Maine has asked itself how to conserve more land – a topic of importance because the state holds a small percent of public acres. Some stakeholders see adding a second national park as a solution for tourism while others see it as a hindrance to the state's natural resource industries. Park proponents note Acadia National Park's success to attract close to 3 million visitors a year. RESTORE: The North Maine Woods, a non-profit based in Hallowell, has proposed the idea of a second Maine park to cover 3.2 million acres in inland Maine. A 2001 economic report done by University of Montana's Thomas Power, Ph. D., documented positive reasons for a potential Maine North Woods National Park (Power, 2001). Interviewed stakeholders in this study discussed the fiery national park controversy without prompting. Whether for or against the park, Mainers express their views emotionally. The majority believes a national park is not a way to gain more public land or to market tourism and argues proponents have not listened to their needs. Those angered include leaseholders, who want access to their existing camps; hunters and fishermen, who want access to the resources; and private recreation businesses like guides who depend on the landscape to make money. Support for the park, nonetheless, still exists statewide, as stated in Sierra Club and Critical Insights polls. A 2000 Sierra Club poll found 63 percent of those living in the southern part of the state favor a park and 45 percent in northern Maine do (Young, 2000). A 2005 Critical Insights poll showed 43 percent of respondents in support of a park and 30 percent in opposition (Churchill, 2005). It's valuable to look at the proposed Maine North Woods National Park debate as a way to examine Maine's land-use controversies.

General sentiment is that Mainers do not trust RESTORE, originally headquartered in Massachusetts, or those from away – including the federal government – who try to tell Mainers what to do. Mainers grew angry with the National Park Service, for example, when the Appalachian Trail became a national parkway in the mid-'90s because the government took, by eminent domain, camps located within 1,000 feet of each side of the trail. This fear of the feds reaches into the core of the park argument. Greenville and Millinocket, in 2000, passed community resolutions opposing the park. Legislator Joe Clark (D-Millinocket) sponsored a 2001 resolution in opposition to the park and any type of feasibility study that passed the State's House. (Schenck High School students, 2002). Also, the Bangor City Council, in 2001, publicly vocalized its park opposition (Young, 2001). In 2005, State Rep. Henry Joy (R-Crystal) proposed "An Act to Prohibit the Federal Government from Owning Property in the State Not Specifically

Authorized in the United States Constitution.” It did not pass, but if it had, it would have prevented a new national park and repealed the state law allowing the U.S. government to establish national forests within Maine’s borders. Joy, who lives in Aroostook County, claimed he was trying to protect Mainers by making a northern Maine national park against state law. All the players have yet to come to the table to discuss the proposed North Maine Woods National Park. Most groups approach the issue with an all-or-nothing proposition. Following below are more specifics on why some say yes and others say no.

Related: Similar to the park debate is a 6,000-acre addition proposed for Baxter State Park that has Mainers in disagreement. In January 2006, state officials announced a \$14 million land deal to acquire the Katahdin Lake area on the park’s east side owned by a private timber company. A national land conservation firm, the Trust for Public Land, plans to raise the money by July. Through a land swap, the timber company, Gardner, will receive access to timberlands elsewhere. Because Baxter’s new addition would be off-limits to hunting, the deal has concerned some Millinocket officials and area recreationists. Hunters and motorized sportsmen said the proposal would hurt the area’s economy, and the Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine (SAM) asked that language be added to legislation insisting that hunting and snowmobiling be allowed (Bides, 2006). To satisfy the diverse stakeholders, lawmakers passed a compromise that splits the parcel, adding approximately 4,000 acres to be managed by Baxter and 2,000 acres allowing traditional uses to be managed by BPL.

Saying Yes to a National Park. Because access and ecological integrity are uncertain on private land in inland Maine, some recreationists said the tourism industry should support a national park to protect fragile lands and the quality of the tourist experience. Recreation is not a focus of the north woods, one stakeholder said. “Even if we call it multiple use, the use [today] really is timber harvesting,” Spalding said. Worried about uncertain outcomes of many land-use practices, more stakeholders speak in favor of a national park. “Initially, I was not for an inland national park, based on seeing outside national parks that are all like strip malls,” Walker said, “but now seeing how the land has changed hands, I see that access and even the integrity of the North Woods is less certain.” Stakeholders, like Walker, find themselves in favor of a process to have the land protected.

To remove concerns of federal ownership, RESTORE invited four inland Mainers in 1996 to view the positive outcomes in Ely, Minn., which is situated on the border of a national forest and international

waters. When the mining industry declined, Ely townspeople pulled themselves out of the doldrums to promote and protect the nearby national forest. After seeing Ely, the visiting Mainers became open to a federal designation, whether a national park or other form. “In the end, those people liked the thought of a national forest,” said St. Pierre, acknowledging that he didn’t get all he wanted. “At least it moved the thinking from a private to a national entity.” If an inland national park would come into existence, the state would gain federal dollars to create this additional conserved public land. Money the state is spending currently to protect parts of that area could be saved. Many Mainers let anti-federal attitudes affect the state’s land conservation dialogue. This shuts down federal involvement quickly even though a national park is just one of 21 types of designations – the next most obvious a national forest. “Everybody talks about [the designation] as a national park or nothing, but it could be a lot of different options,” Conover said. “Most of the park haters hate it without even reading the proposal, but they just know they hate it. We need to protect a big chunk to be wilderness. Somebody like Bill Gates could buy the whole thing, but it’s more likely a whole nation would buy it. Maine has been anti-federal for a long time.” The land discussion becomes hampered by an us-against-them attitude. Perhaps the recently formed Maine Woods Forever organization can help examine the best of the federal designations that could feel right to residents (LaPage & Quimby, 2003). This group, unlike RESTORE, is open to a variety of classifications other than a park and has had regular meetings for more than a year with inland stakeholders to keep the dialogue open.

National park proponents see the increasing number of easement purchases, often viewed as quasi-public lands, as a counteraction to the park worsened by the fact that easements do not typically include interpretive public access or recreation management plans. Many of these easements, especially the mega-easements, are located in areas less vulnerable to development with no public roads or amenities. As the park proposal continues to sit on the table, proponents ask that future easement contracts not incorporate language that would prohibit a future park. “I had some real concerns of the language in [the West Branch project documents] before it evolved,” St. Pierre said. “Now there is no language in the documents that will prohibit the lands from becoming a national park if that is what people want in the future.” Easements, perhaps, ought to be scrutinized to see how they affect related land decisions, such as a national park.

Finally, as a positive note for both sides, awareness of conserved land has heightened since the national park debate began more than five years ago. The number of acres of conserved land has increased in part due to

the park debate. “The park has helped to frame a lot of the debate and spurred on a lot of conservation efforts even though not a designated national park yet,” St. Pierre said. “Ensuring public access has been of concern.” With a small amount of public land in Maine and the opportunity to protect wild land not found geographically anywhere else in the lower 48, it seems a Maine North Woods National Park presents a viable option.

Saying No to a National Park. Reasons against a second national park, based on criticisms of federal procedures, stack up. The idea of federal involvement upsets some more than the actual park specifics. The role of the federal government concerns stakeholders because many believe it does not have the funds to operate another Maine park. Plus, the federal government has a history of getting rid of its land management responsibility by turning over authority to other groups. When federal authorities were unable to handle the Appalachian Trail management, it gave authority to a non-profit, the Appalachian Trail Conference (now called the Appalachian Trail Conservancy), in 1984. Some stakeholders shy away from the federal government simply because they find federal rules on park lands to be tedious. “I have no desire to have the federal government in Maine,” Libby said. “I have hunted on a lot of federal land and the regulations get tiresome as when you can’t tie your horse to a tree because it might rub on a tree. I’ve been to places where you have to carry out the human waste and I ask, ‘Why can’t you bury it?’” Those who have worked as consultants for the National Park Service even find the NPS rules to be cumbersome. “National parks by and large preclude hunting and do not allow snowmobiling and forest management operations within the boundaries of the park,” said Warren, who has done GPS mapping at Crater Lake, Yosemite and Glacier national parks. Although a national park designation can prohibit logging and hunting, RESTORE indicates its national park plan allows for logging and hunting in designated areas.

Mainers tied to traditional land uses, like logging, are afraid a national park would not tolerate multi-use options. “I know that some want a national park, and I think that this changes the direction too far of the North Maine Woods,” Simko said. “The Maine woods will be fragmented, so, if we know that and can deal with that, I think conservation easements give the best bang for tolerable uses between industrial uses and conservation.” Taking the above notion a step further, a new park could change the makeup of the surrounding communities on issues from local job opportunities to politics. Tourism feeds fears of unattractive, low-end jobs, even at the park level, with local people unable to make local decisions. “People

who live around national parks often find themselves frustrated at the level of local decision-making,” Warren added. “I think that this would be difficult for people in Greenville to accept it. Those people in those areas have made their income from forest products, hunting, snowmobiles and now ATVs.” The look of the community could change, too, through additional infrastructure. A great deal of infrastructure would be needed for a national park, according to some, that could hurt the environment in the end. One anti-park stakeholder questions the validity of the 2001 economic impact study in regard to multiple issues. “The [Thomas] Power report was poorly done,” said Andy Kekacs, publisher/owner of the electronic newsletter “Maine Woodsman.” “The numbers anticipate several million tourists a year who will have to be there for several nights because it is remote. We’d have to bring so many tourists there to have the economic impact that the infrastructure would be so large that it would be an environmentally bad plan.” One stakeholder in favor of a second Maine national park admits the national park proposal has come at the wrong time to the wrong place. “It will be hard to integrate the national park discussion into any debate,” Urquhart said. “It is driven by people who are not from Maine and viewed as a direct assault – wrongly in my opinion.” This leads to the idea that a national park would place all your eggs in one basket.

Finally, some argue that the state’s existing inland lands should be better utilized instead of adding new parcels through a national park. One stakeholder finds it illogical to protect inland areas through a national park if those areas already operate under some type of government protection. “There are close to 10 specific places like Gulf Hagas that are already owned by the state or federal government,” said Field, referring to the fact that Gulf Hagas area outside Brownville Junction is part of the Appalachian Trail corridor, which is federally owned and managed under the auspices of the National Park Service and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. “To me, it is pure fraud if you lead a person to protect this land that you already preserve.” The state should better document the fact that existing inland lands have a lot to offer.

RELATED TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The three Blaine House state role recommendations don’t acknowledge related factors needed for a sustainable tourism plan. This section discusses three factors: Creating an Interagency State Tourism Board; Increasing Tourism’s Funding to the State and Its Entrepreneurs; and Keeping Land Access Open.

Creating an Interagency State Tourism Board. State agencies can make a difference by acting together as one entity. This, therefore, gives all government agencies a role to protect what Maine has and to avoid conflicting actions. “If one state agency is going to promote the land for tourists,” said Jon Olson of the Maine Farm Bureau in Augusta, “then another state agency needs to lay low for the damage created by it.” What one state agency does often has ramifications on another agency. To better address state tourism efforts, stakeholders suggested creating a new political tourism board that includes an expanded Office of Tourism role. The current Office of Tourism mandate is limited to marketing and administrative functions. “[The Office of Tourism] is not to be just another grant-giving agency but a catalyst for getting communities together,” Jans said. Stakeholders suggested a tourism board be made up of representatives of multiple agencies with the Office of Tourism to address topics that cut across agencies, such as transportation, wildlife and conservation. A standing tourism board could coordinate conflicting policies and combine agency efforts, including funding of statewide and local projects. The Office of Tourism, perhaps, should share its \$7 million-plus annual budget with other departments. It could allot funds, for instance, to the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources for the Open Farm Day festival, which struggles to gather the necessary finances to organize and plan the annual agritourism event. The SPO, in particular, should take on a larger role within the new board as it is used to working with outside agencies and players to craft policy, as it has done for the state’s coastal lands. The recent findings of Fermata – a tourism consultant hired by the governor – appear to add to a potential statewide plan. “There is so much that can be done, even with limited resources,” Sochasky said. “It would be nice to have a single, comprehensive plan, but there are likely too many players and interests.” If a coordinated tourism body could be achieved, it could improve interaction with the public and could assess broader goals – measuring visitor satisfaction and improving the quality of the experience – than the Office of Tourism addresses. Care should be taken to avoid a bigger bureaucracy in the process.

Increasing Tourism’s Funding to the State and Its Entrepreneurs. The state can best assist the tourism industry by allowing more tourism-raised tax dollars to go directly into the hands of those in need – whether entrepreneurs or local government bodies. The seven percent meals and lodging tax, instituted as a dedicated funding formula in 2004, only returned \$300,000 to the industry that year. The tax returned this

small portion because the majority of the tax goes to the state's General Fund. Some stakeholders question why the tourism industry must support the state's pocketbook for education, health care and other non-tourism industries but not reap its own rewards.

Money is needed on every level to make the tourism wheel go round. Non-profit groups raise their own funds but need state support. State dollars, perhaps, should go to outside organizations that enhance Maine's recreational tourism opportunities. In reality, state support needs to be sent in many directions because what individual groups, such as the Maine Conservation Corps, do for the state is invaluable. During the past 20 years, the MCC has built more non-motorized trails than any other Maine organization. "The Maine Conservation Corps has been the primary source for rehabilitating trails as well as assisting with many other recreation projects," said Spalding, who is the former director of the MCC. "Eleven years ago the state reduced funding to the MCC to fund only the director's position. The MCC was left to its own devices to find funding to actually operate the program." Next, Maine's small towns need a steady contribution of money over a long period in order to make an impact on economic development. Industry professionals in small towns said they struggle to make ends meet. "There needs to be an increase in funding that is insanely low," Jans said. "I don't know how they think that little towns can turn themselves around so quickly." Town revitalizations do not happen overnight. Finally, funding woes have put a red blotch on the state parks. Limited funding for state park and state sites, in particular, is detrimental to tourism. Stakeholders frequently refer to the crumbling state park system. "Faced with smaller budgets and aging facilities," Sochasky said, "we need to explore new ways to preserve these vital resource-linked tourism assets." Due to Maine's financial crisis, the state has considered privatizing concessions at state parks. This is believed to be a poor solution because quality lessens. "It's important for the state to maintain control," said Gabrielle Kissinger, the northern regional conservation director of the Appalachian Mountain Club. "To privatize concessions is not a good idea. If a private entity runs a state campground, then it's tougher to make sure that a management philosophy be carried out. The ongoing debate asks how can the state continue to manage its own park system?" Money must be found to feed the private, local and state tourism needs.

Funding problems could be alleviated, perhaps, if the state more aggressively took advantage of financial sources. Government-run lodging could become a better source of income for the state. Overnight

visitors bring in revenue at 12 state parks that allow camping. Opportunities also exist for towns to profit from lodging visitors in town-owned facilities. Tourists, for example, can rent a cabin run by the town of Enfield. Two cabins sit off the state-owned Morgan's Beach along Cold Stream Pond. For several decades, the town has leased the cabins and the beach from the state. When tourists stay, they pay the "Town of Enfield" \$225 or \$250 per week, depending on which cabin they chose. The money goes to care for the beach, therefore, supporting stewardship principles.

The state should access federal funding sources to benefit federal, state and local lands. Federal money is available, for instance, from the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCFA), which provides up to \$900 million nationally every year to purchase lands and waters. Created by Congress in 1964, the fund receives revenues, primarily, from fees paid by companies drilling offshore for oil and gas. Some LWCF monies have never been distributed. "Acadia National Park and all the federal refuges in Maine, like Sunkhaze, need [money]," Olson said. "The state of Maine needs to do a better job advocating for all the sites." What money has been garnered from the fund, Olson said, goes stateside rather than for Maine's federal assets like Acadia and U.S. Fish & Wildlife refuges and the Appalachian Trail. "These [federal properties] are just as important for the person who comes into the state of Maine," he said. Maine should not look away from free federal dollars to enhance all its properties, especially its federal sites that have been overlooked somewhat.

Keeping Land Access Open. Access is the most discussed, and perhaps the most challenging, element of land use. The idea that private land is really public reaches deep into Maine's psyche. The tourism industry worries about future access to the landscape. "We didn't build an attraction that draws people here like a theme park," Polstein said. "So, our guests' access is no way guaranteed. The very resources we depend on we have no guarantee that we will continue to have use of them." What's more is that access in Maine is not guaranteed for anyone – residents, tourists or even workers. Artisans, for instance, can be denied access to a private or non-profit land resulting in limited areas from which to paint. "I've been kicked off of islands 10 years ago by a group where you had to be a member of an environmental organization that wanted you to have a card to be there," said Eric Hopkins, North Haven painting gallery owner, who acknowledges similar access problems on his island. Land-use cohesiveness is

put to the test when private and public interests do not mesh, causing landowners to say no to recreation on their lands. Instances affecting tourism include hunting and fishing regulations. In 2005, a legislative proposal to include Sundays as another day of hunting was squelched quickly by landowners who did not want hunters on their land literally every day of the week, as hunting is already allowed Monday through Saturday.

Land sales pose a particular challenge to land access. Plum Creek timber company's plan to develop high-end residences around Moosehead Lake, where development has been limited, troubles Mainers. The land-use conflict has been tracked in the area's newspaper, the "Moosehead Messenger," with little support for development. Years ago, before the current Plum Creek controversy, a "Messenger" editorial writer said: "Just when we all thought that continued public access for recreation was in the bag, we face the prospects of a new owner's potential property access rules. In Maine, we fight for individual property rights – embracing large corporate landowners within the definition of individuals – so long as we continue to have unfettered access" (Rolde, 2001). Access has dwindled, however, as private ownership has changed with large tracts fragmented. The current increase of land sales to timber investors could mean more frequent timber harvest for short-term returns and rapid sale to the next owner. No longer can Mainers walk anywhere. For the tourism industry, this is a serious consideration. Getting off the beaten path, meaning primarily onto private land, is relevant to the industry's success. The willingness of private landowners to share has changed with increased land sales because new landowners do not extend the long-standing tradition of public access to private land. More than 2 million acres of Maine's private lands, according to RESTORE, are posted against trespassing. Some believe Maine needs more conserved land due to the changing ownership. "So much land is being sold that we can't count on that land being there," said Boyle from an economic point of view. "So this is why that there is more need for more protection." Potential closure of private lands to the public possibly could be avoided by monitoring land sales and telling potential land buyers of Maine's tradition of open access for recreation.

THIS STUDY'S CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Note to Readers: Full names and titles of stakeholders are presented here for the readers' convenience. (See Appendix B for the complete list of this study's stakeholders.)

The role of the state is important to enhance the fragmented tourism industry. Solutions must be found as tourists avoid rural Maine towns because, in part, those areas lack identifiable destinations. Policy, through state participation, can address increasing sustainable tourism actions while protecting Maine's natural resources. "We could be a global leader of how to incorporate sustainable tourism into a long-range plan to fold into state policy," said Natalie Springuel, marine extension associate for Maine Sea Grant and a former private sea kayak guide in Bar Harbor. "We must address this now because ... there will be significant impact for ecological reasons. The opportunist in me thinks that it's now time due to the energy around the world and then, specifically, in Maine." Below find two lessons from the academic literature related to state roles followed by direct steps the state can take through this study's stakeholder suggestions.

Academic Lesson: Developing a Sensitivity for Sustainability. The government's role, as presented in scholarly research, is to create environmental policies with sensitivity toward private sector interests. The public sector can best practice environmental management by consulting with the tourism sector – operators, agency professionals and tourists – to identify best practices and opportunities and by pinpointing barriers to management including personal, sociocultural, economic and structural hindrances (Pigram, 2000).

In order to succeed, a positive response must come from both the public and private sectors to a statewide sustainability imperative. Government's role must emphasize any and all elements of sustainability. The Australian government has proved itself to be a leader in sustainability. "The precautionary principle, intergenerational equity, conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity and improved valuation and pricing of environmental resources, are embodied in federal and state legislation" (Murphy, 1994). Even small places, such as the Cook Islands in the mid-Pacific Ocean, have made policies to protect the environment while enhancing tourism. Infrastructure is required to be made of native materials and in culturally reflective styles with height limits. "Tourism should not be the means for us to change our way of life but an incentive to make us more aware of what we are in terms of our culture, customs and traditions" (Okotai, 1980). The private industry's role must mirror the strengths of government policies supporting sustainability. If the private sector does not do this, results will be poor. "There tends to be a gap between sectors: while a local community can discuss and adopt sustainable tourism as a formal

socially developed policy, the policy may not influence investment decisions made by private firms” (McCool, 2004). Society needs to move beyond compliance to incorporate a proactive environmental dimension backed by legislation.

Another method to develop sustainability is for state marketing to reflect ethics that promote protection. Take snowmobiling, for example, in Maine. You don’t just snowmobile in Maine, but you snowmobile in an environmentally conscious way in Maine by staying on trail and not speeding. Let the state market an eco-ethic as part of recreational options with support given only to projects with a stewardship element. “The tourism industry lacks an active resource stewardship component to its planning – and darn well needs one,” said Lee Sochasky, executive director of the St. Croix International Waterway Commission in Calais. “It is notable that the Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-Based Industries has a series of key policy discussions on how to use the golden goose but not one on how to perpetuate it.” The state should choose marketing messages that will help sustain the natural resources.

Academic Lesson: Developing a New Attitude toward the Public. Government structure, in the academic literature, is referenced more by attitude than by a breakdown of legislative bodies. Government must interact thoughtfully with the public. Federal, state and local natural resource professionals must remember they work for the public and must make them part of the final outcome. They should beware of treating their citizenry as unknowledgeable, which is a common occurrence when presenting complex scientific ecology theories. “Natural resource professionals must be asked not to reduce citizens to their own preconceived, structured, objective ways of thinking and stereotypes but to interact with and look at them in a new light” (Propst, Wellman, Campa III, & McDonough, 2000). Citizens, through their communities, need a voice in the decision-making process. “Those who are trying to define and advocate ecosystem management make it clear that human communities must be part of the equation and that power sharing with communities should be a major role of natural resource agencies” (Propst, et.al., 2000). More citizen participation in government means the traditional role of the resource manager as an omniscient, autocratic expert is being challenged in conjunction with challenges to authority-based leadership models across society (Heifitz & Sinder, 1988, Sirmon, 1993).

Leisure's potential to improve people's lives has been lost in a system that measures success through the number of trails constructed, acres acquired or restricted uses. Government should not make the tourism industry's success into a numbers game but rather strive for satisfying experiences. Government must encourage natural resource professionals to facilitate management that results in positive visitor experiences. Many employees, unfortunately, view their jobs as managing resources rather than one of administering a service delivery system (Bruns, 1995).

When interacting with the public, government needs to present a balanced platform. Government should balance facts, which do not vary, with opinions, which can vary greatly. In the state of Maine, attitudes toward land use and single- vs. multi-use trails, for example, can demonstrate the need for government input to address conflicts. "While there is little knowledge difference between rural and urban residents in relation to natural resources, particularly wildlife, there are significant differences in how people believe these resources should be used. The challenge for resource managers of the future is to recognize, acknowledge and balance these conflicting values" (Kellert, 1996).

1. Create an Interagency Tourism Board. Stakeholders ask that a new tourism board be designed to include various agencies to pool human and financial resources. In the process, the role of the Office of Tourism can be expanded beyond marketing. Tourism constituents, in front of this new board, could benefit from talking to a wide group of agencies at one time. The work of outside groups like Fermata, a tourism consultant hired by the governor, can be better received and incorporated into a statewide plan if all players could be present. Up to this point, interest has existed in tourism from multiple agencies, but this newfound interest has not guided a comprehensive tourism plan. The board would allow dialogue to begin between agencies not currently planning together. Plus, tourism has been a broad sector for the legislature in which several committees – including Business Research and Economic Development, Transportation or Wildlife – each hear tourism-related proposals. One could say that tourism has been pushed around by the legislature with no real home. If tourism continues to lack legislative priority, treated primarily as an add-on to the business sector, the state will lose its ability to compete with other New England states developing market strategies.

2. Build Tourism Information Centers. Government should assess the organization and quality of interpretation at visitor centers, especially as a showcase of Maine’s entrepreneurs. Tourism, a service industry, relies on centers as contact points with visitors to relay important information on everything from things-to-do to stewardship. Video cameras could be installed at centers that display live feeds of puffins on Eastern Egg Island off Boothbay Harbor or a windjammer setting sail in Camden or views from atop Mount Katahdin in Baxter State Park. The responsibility for centers, according to stakeholders, extends beyond any one government agency in order to support all parts of the state. “This is especially important to rural Maine,” said Bucky Owen, the former commissioner of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife. “I pushed [nodes] when I was in IF&W, but there were no dollars at the time [in the mid-’90s] to support it.” Multiple agencies should work together to provide diverse resource information on activities like camping, wildlife viewing and fishing to serve the nature-based tourist.

3. Improve Tourism’s Funding. Throwing money at a problem isn’t always a bad idea. Increased tourism funds are needed by the state, communities and private groups that make tourism happen on a daily basis. The state should return a larger portion of the meals and lodging tax to the tourism industry to allow dollars raised by the industry to benefit it rather than the state’s General Fund. Within communities, some of Maine’s tourism challenges stem from a severe lack of funding. Small towns argue that their operating funds are too low to be of help with tourism. Funds need to be distributed to assist with planning and infrastructure. These funds currently do not exist in the Office of Tourism’s budget. Finally, state dollars should go to outside organizations, and perhaps even landowners, to enhance recreational tourism opportunities. The Maine Conservation Corps, during the past 20 years, has built more non-motorized trails than any other Maine organization but has had almost all its funding removed and must operate on its own even though it’s enhancing the public Maine landscape.

4. Increase Amount of Accessible Land. Mainers want to preserve the ability to walk on their lands – whether private or public. Efforts need to be made to do what’s necessary to increase the amount of land accessible to tourists. The state should be applauded for adding 4,000 acres to Baxter State Park and

2,000 acres nearby to BPL as part of a \$14 million purchase yet to be finalized later in 2006. Most Mainers would like to see an increase in the amount of acreage dedicated to public use. Maine, with only 6.75 percent of public land, ranks well below the national per state average. Maine's most-known public land includes its fragile state park system, which lacks money, management and promotion to increase tourism. More lands should be identified and acquired for the public. A community in Western Maine saved a piece of land through a joint effort to continue access. "There are some places that are just too special to be gated," said Steve Wight of the Sunday River Inn in Newry. "There will be a piece of land gated here in our community that had always been allowed to be used by the public, but the landowner had wanted to sell it. We worked very hard to make sure the Mahoussocs Land Trust is going to buy it so that it can be added to a public reserve unit of the state." As for private land, ways need to be found to address landowners who deny access to their lands. Formal agreements regarding recreational access are sought so that new future owners cannot change the system. Gaining landowner permission can be difficult for an individual, a community or the state. Agreements that have gone on with informal handshakes in the past need to be formalized now to secure permanent access. "My worry is that with all the green people coming up here that someone might decide that he or she doesn't want snowmobiles on the trails," said Paul Fichtner, owner of Big Lake Equipment in Greenville, "and we've just lost the continuity of the communities." The state needs to help with the access dialogue. Non-profits, in particular, need help facilitating talks with landowners about land use or purchase, according to the Western Mountains Foundation that plans to cross approximately 14 ownerships with its new trail. Finally, to keep land accessible, paying a fee to visit a private location is an idea most interviewees support.

5. Manage Land to Recognize Tourism's Economics. Land could be managed with the intent to strengthen tourism and to increase the number of industry dollars garnered. Too often a disconnect occurs amongst land, tourism and economics. Conserved land, whether owned by the state, a non-profit or a forest landowner, needs to invite tourists and be inviting through its infrastructure. As acquisitions continue, the state needs to place a tourism focus on land contracts, stakeholders said. Strategically made conserved land purchases encourage new entrepreneurship. Scenic locations can attract businesses looking to be in pristine natural areas. One stakeholder bought an inn after nearby lands were set aside by a land trust. Jeff McEvoy

purchased the historic Weatherby's inn in Grand Lake Stream because the Downeast Lakes Land Trust – Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership protected the area. “It was because of this conservation project that I was willing to invest in this property,” said McEvoy, the inn's owner. “They are going to keep half a million acres undeveloped, which includes much of the shorefront on the surrounding lakes.” He felt safe to invest in the business because the land around the inn would not be developed. Maine's solution to sufficient public land has looked toward easements. Although easements are a way to prevent gated land, they do not guarantee public access. Maine needs to assess if tourism will be best served through easements vs. fee purchases. Easements could be viewed as the wrong way to approach available land needs because they simply remove development rights rather than allow trails and other elements for tourism to prosper in Maine. In some ways, easements allow for business as usual. “It could be argued that the [land] heirs were simply being given a tidy sum of cash to continue what they've always done – log their forests” (Rolde, 2001). Dave Field, Ph.D., chair of the University of Maine's Department of Forest Management, believes its better to provide infrastructure than to give cash to landowners. “The challenge is to entice landowners to provide recreation opportunities, without having them provide exclusive use to one group, and to make it affordable,” Field said. In any case, recreation on private land can add to tourism's economic structure through fees or increased traffic to rural towns.

6. Create Recreation Areas for Specific Opportunities. Motorized and non-motorized recreationists overlap in often-unfriendly ways in the state of Maine. Use of the same land parcels, whether public or private, leads to tension on and off the trail. Stakeholders argue that not every land acquisition should be multi-use because some acquisitions are only suitable for one purpose. Minnesota has proven motorized and non-motorized designations are possible, appropriate and doable. Most known for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness containing 1,200 miles of canoe routes, Minnesota also has the Superior National Forest where multiple recreations and use of the forest can take place. “Minnesota has 1.2 million acres of federally designated land where you cannot use motors, and state politics can't touch it,” said Garrett Conover, co-owner of North Woods Ways guiding business in Willimantic. “The Superior National Forest, which is also federal, buffers that area, and you can have motors there.” Conover admires how Ely, Minn., has been able to zero in and profit from serving multiple recreations, including the quiet

user. “Maine is being stupid by just courting motor users. All we need is \$5 per gallon of gas prices, and that is gone.” Recreating in separate areas might not be the solution as much as recreating with stewardship intentions. Today, the aggressive public will bulldoze gates, such as when a local fin and feather club reacted in inland Maine. “All it takes is a couple of ATVs in mud season, and they have a big problem,” said Thomas Urquhart, partner in Urquhart & Spiritz consulting firm in Portland. “When landowners tried to gate those roads, the Fin and Feather club of Millinocket bulldozed those gates.” If users behave wisely, the need to recreate separately can dissipate to some degree.

This chapter on state agency roles documents who does what in Augusta and how these political players interact with the wider stakeholder audience. Key issues, such as regulation burdens, land access limitations and infrastructure demands, are discussed in terms of what the state can and should do. The next chapter on sustainable economic development planning creates a more formal method to address the issues challenging tourism. Good planning can assign responsibilities to the appropriate parties, including the state, to result in a successful industry with solid economic results.

CHAPTER 6: BLAINE HOUSE PROPOSAL

IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

RESEARCH STUDY

Economic development planning should be part of the dialogue to achieve a healthy Maine tourism industry. This idea is one of the tourism proposals that came from the Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-based Industries. The Nov. 17, 2003 conference produced proposals to strengthen tourism while benefiting the other natural resource sectors. Conference dialogue focused on the four tourism proposals – economic development planning, education, state roles and branding – that came from the consensus of state-level groups: the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Office of Tourism and the Maine Tourism Commission’s Natural Resources Committee.

Specifically, the conference led to two recommendations on economic development planning sent to the governor:

1. Develop a planning matrix. The State Planning Office, Department of Economic and Community Development and the Maine Tourism Commission’s Natural Resources Committee should develop a planning matrix that considers development in the context of environmental and social carrying capacity. Communities and regions can use the matrix to develop tourism development blueprints.

2. Perform a SWOT analysis. Economic development districts, government councils and regional tourism districts need to define Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in the matrix.

To consider these recommendations, conference attendees indicated other factors should be evaluated through the following observations:

- The planning processes should recognize the key role of each community in determining appropriate tourism and recreation opportunities.
- Tourism’s development should positively affect all tourism niches, including cultural tourism.
- The planning should recognize the interrelationship between the natural resource industries.
- Regional tourism organizations need to provide consistent and effective marketing support.

- Planning should involve communities, regions, businesses and state agencies that develop, implement and direct programs.
- High value vs. high volume should be examined in any appropriate recommendation.

This chapter analyzes the two Blaine House conference recommendations regarding economic development planning and related observations through the voices of the 43 diverse stakeholders interviewed for this study. (See the full list of stakeholders in Appendix B.) It will become evident how these stakeholders agree or disagree with the conference recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism economic development planning involves three topics – economics, development and planning. Tourism, economically, is the world’s No. 1 industry and employs approximately one in nine workers or 204 million jobs and generates \$3.4 trillion or 6 percent of the global gross national product, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council. Tourism became the third largest U.S. retail industry, behind food and auto sales, in the mid ’80s. In Maine, more income is generated per acre by Acadia National Park than by an acre of commercial timberland for the entire state of Maine, according to a research model developed by Michigan State University (Olson, 2002). Locations with strong tourism economic development receive a financial pay-off, yet sustainable tourism – being sought in Maine and many nature-based regions – results in more than pure economic benefits. “Development of tourism provides a number of opportunities, not only for visitors to experience the splendors these settings offer, but also for local communities to reap economic benefit through employment, tax revenues and infrastructure development, for residents to boost their quality of life, and for local people seeking respectable prospects for protecting their natural and cultural heritage” (McCool, 2004). Sustainable tourism businesses, therefore, seek more than a greater number of tickets sold or tours given, as standard tourism principles do to reap higher profits. “Efforts are growing to shift private sector efforts from simply promoting more use to gain a greater share of the available market to building a genuine marketing match between visitor desires and products offered” (Bruns, 1995). Overall, sustainable tourism creates informed tourists, economically profitable communities and culturally proud residents.

Research identifies who the planners are and how they should operate. Borderless planning should occur amongst government, communities and the private sector. If one of the three acts on its own, the other two can become disrupted. “Providers within each of the three key sectors are functioning both as equals and more as facilitators and less as controllers; while each retains their organizational decision-making authority. They nonetheless continually engage one another as co-laborers, outlining their respective contributions to the community’s desired future” (Bruns, 1995). Functioning as equals is important because natural resource agencies must share power with communities rather than act as authorities. “Potential partners never come to the table equal in power. The key is to make power imbalances explicit and to facilitate equitable power sharing as much as possible. Because professionals are not often trained to either of these tasks, partnership work is challenging” (Grumbine, 1997).

The use of partnerships is key to planning, especially to focus on environmental health while promoting economic opportunities. The tourism industry has entered into partnerships with environmental groups and has consulted effectively with host communities and management agencies to support conservation (Pigram, 2000). The Tourism Council of Australia produced an Environmental Code of Practice in consultation with conservation groups, industry bodies and planning authorities (Tourism Council of Australia, 1998). Its points include environmental protection, social and economic community benefits and economic viability without affecting other sectors of the economy.

As a regional tourism plan is designed, each community in that region must endorse the planning process. Statewide leaders should hold local informational meetings and allow each governing body to comment on a draft of the plan (Long, Nuckolls & Sem, 2002). Discussions must include who is going to make ongoing decisions. A redistribution of power must take place, both politically and economically, toward the future because present generations will have to maintain options for future generations (McCool, 2004). Stakeholders, with a plan in hand, should hold each other accountable by acting as watchdog groups. “Such accountability relationships are a key ingredient of sustainability; all providing partners must continue implementing each community’s agreed-upon plan design so as to achieve the stated vision of their communities’ common future” (Bruns, 1995). The complex process of planning becomes muddled if stakeholders do not seek the same goals. This is because players come at tourism from different places due to fragmentation built within the industry. “Tourism is a fragmented, competitive,

high-risk industry, dominated in tourist destinations by many, small, family-operated firms” (Goodall, 1995). A state needs a formal vision of what it wants to look like so tourism can be guided to the right places in the right way. Tourists, whether from in state or out of state, need places to go. Wandering doesn’t pay for the tourist or the tourism industry. This chapter addresses the consequences of a lack of planning.

BACKGROUND

The first question many people have is: Where do tourists go in Maine? Maine tourists visit two locations: anecdotally, L.L. Bean is assumed to be the No. 1 tourist attraction with Acadia National Park as No. 2. Where else tourists travel isn’t clear. A better plan is needed to know and influence tourism’s statewide path because the plan up to now has been to simply get tourists across the state line. “The tourism industry is entirely demand-side focused on ‘Get those people across the bridge in Kittery, and then they will figure out what to do,’” said Thomas Urquhart, partner in the Urquhart & Spritz consulting firm in Portland. Before discussing each of the two Blaine House recommendations, it’s necessary to step back to understand the current planning climate as stagnant tourism levels call for cooperative public and private efforts to openly discuss the issues. Maine’s who-does-what industry map incorporates fragmented puzzle pieces that don’t fit together. This jaggedness prevents smooth planning from one layer to the next – whether referring to state agencies or competing natural resource industries – and is such a poor fit that the system sometimes appears broken. “At present, there is not a central organization that can identify collective resources,” said Larry Warren, president of the Western Mountains Foundation creating the Mahoosucs-Moosehead trail, “and market those resources to a broad constituency and coordinate the development of those activities.” Interviewed stakeholders put forth a call to begin the planning process to create a quality industry. “The state’s tourism industry is still in an identity crisis,” said Lee Sochasky, executive director of the St. Croix International Waterway Commission in Calais, “in how to define itself, what businesses to align with and how to plan for the future.” A quality industry can be defined in terms of financial, environmental or social benefits. Conflicts arise between business owners who see quantity as a problem and those who don’t. T-shirt vendors, for example, represent stereotypical businesses that ignore capacity in hope of attracting and selling as many T-shirts to as many people as possible. “The permanent

businesses want [Mount Desert Island] to be totally livable and, therefore, reasonable,” said Ken Olson, president of Friends of Acadia in Bar Harbor. “The T-shirt folks want to smash as many people on the island as possible.” Attitudes of the island’s stakeholders vary from sales at any cost to stewardship. Those with a high environmental concern – who worry that if you build it, they will come – argue that current levels of stewardship are not enough to maintain resources. “The conservation being done is not going to protect the sporting industry or quality of the fishing experience forever,” said Jeff McEvoy, owner of Weatherly’s inn in Grand Lake Stream. The Allagash Wilderness Waterway, as another example, is caving continually into less wilderness and more access, and the fighting between the groups has worsened.

State government appears to be responding through Gov. John Baldacci’s nature-based tourism initiative that has sent tourism experts into communities to foster discussion. Fermata Inc., a Vermont-based consulting firm, hosted regional meetings in the Western mountains, Moosehead Lake and Downeast areas and released recommendations June 30, 2005. Baldacci, also, ordered a 2005 study of the “Creative Economy” aimed at tying key industries, including tourism, with creative efforts to better Maine’s economic forecast. Additional funding for tourism-related programs has been minimal. Some monies, such as through the Land for Maine’s Future (LMF) program, will indirectly benefit tourism. A \$12 million bond issue to be matched by at least \$7 million in private and public contributions passed on a 2005 ballot. Funds will be used to purchase fee and easement parcels statewide from willing sellers for conservation, water access, wildlife and fish habitat, outdoor recreation, farmland preservation and working waterfront preservation. One legislative voice to protect the environment from development has come from State Rep. Sean Faircloth (D-Bangor), who suggested creating trails for birders. “If we encroach upon cream of the crop wetlands and degrade those,” he said, “we are going to end up with another shopping plaza and a McDonald’s.” Maine needs to look at the environment in an economic way that attracts vibrant businesses – both tourism and non-tourism.

As part of its plan, Maine’s tourism industry needs to evaluate its current market draw. Maine tourism has been for a smaller group of intrepid who travel with a compass in their hands or a map in their heads. To grow, the industry could expand the market beyond the know-how niche. “The people who will just strap their canoe on top of their car and go off on their own to some remote little place are a very small percentage of the market,” said Dianne Tilton, executive director of Sunrise County Economic Council in

Machias, “but if we want to expand that market to families and people like me who have no clue, we need to be prepared to do that.” Mass tourism cannot penetrate Maine’s deep forest. Easier access options are needed to portions of the forest because a backwoods experience is not realistic for the majority of visitors. “My mother isn’t coming to Maine and doing a three-mile hike in to see a beautiful area,” said Judy Walker, a Maine Audubon staff naturalist and director of the Environmental Center at Gilsland Farm in Falmouth. “You’ve got to have the easy options for the mass audiences. You first want them to connect with nature and connect with communities and support the local economy.” Most tourists need some level of handholding not provided by primitive experiences geared toward wealthy out-of-staters. A Maine farmer, emphasizing the importance of community, suggested the tourism industry become more inclusive by viewing everyone, including Mr. and Mrs. Resident, as a tourist. “You spend all this time on tourism and having people coming for those three months in the summertime,” said Gloria Varney, co-owner of Nezinscot Farm in Turner. “We are totally forgetting about people who live here and what those families want to do.” Only select tourists even know of the location of many of these nature-based sites.

Part of the reason that few know is because fear of attracting too many people to pristine areas exists. This fear leads some land managers, especially at non-profits, to avoid publicizing their resources. Maine Coast Heritage Trust, which holds 141 easements and 62 fee-based properties, grapples with the state and tourism industry’s increased publicizing of certain activities. Town officials, throughout the state, face a similar publicity debate. “People in Freeport struggle with how broadly we advertise neighborhoods and small spaces. Do we want everyone going to Hedge Hog Mountain?” asked Walker, referring to the 196-acre town property located just one mile from downtown Freeport. “Yes, we do. If people are stuck in front of their computer and not getting out, then we are losing the battle.” The decision to not market areas or to not post signage excludes visitors who need every opportunity to connect with nature.

Another way to expand the market is to highlight cultural resources. Sustainable tourism seeks visitors willing to learn both about a community’s cultural and natural resource history. Concentrating on cultural tourism captivates tourists with Maine’s complex history. These cultural stories provide attention to untapped attractions in the state and lure travelers to new destination points. “From a hundred centuries of Native American stories to a hundred years of King Spruce; from early explorations along the coast to early explorations in the Maine woods by Thoreau, Roosevelt and others; from the underground railroad to

the Northeast boundary war; from the art of the Maine islands to the art of the Maine woods, we have barely tapped the public interest,” said Jym St. Pierre, Maine director of RESTORE: The North Woods headquartered in Hallowell. The state’s economic value would benefit from tourism leaders unifying cultural and natural parts of our communities.

Maine’s planning strategy has not defined a common vision. Stakeholders, experiencing contentious public meetings on tourism-related topics, desire agreed-upon principles to build a consensus rather than fight about details. Maine’s planning process, ideally, needs government to work with private entities to map out the state’s one strategy that will guide the entire tourist experience. The Office of Tourism should provide a planning forum to assist the state, private and non-profit parties. This process respects multiple entities from communities to businesses to state agencies to volunteers. Actions can be identified and taken, such as recreational options to enhance depressed areas. Bike paths are needed to direct tourists to communities they normally would not travel. Adding a path between Bangor to Calais along a defunct train route, proposed by the Maine Bicycle Coalition, could excite the region. Texas, for example, profited from a newly built birding trail. Successful economic development planning exists on a small scale in some of Maine’s tourism communities. Rangeley, due to the Maine Audubon’s Conservation Works program in the late ’90s, promotes the message that conservation pays directly and indirectly. “The idea had been that conservation is nice, but it is not affordable,” Urquhart said. As part of the program, an economist helped townspeople examine the resources they love with the potential to bring in money. “Now Rangeley has a much better idea. Their watershed is their moneyshed,” he added. The existence or addition of one tourism entity can have tremendous community impact through economic spin-off. The Guilford Bed & Breakfast, for instance, houses 70 guests per night coming to the area for North Woods Ways, an inland guiding business, in Willimantic. With all of the uncertainty of Maine’s plan, tourism entrepreneurs have undersold themselves, afraid of charging, literally, a higher price. Accommodations with low sticker prices are unattractive often from the consumer’s point of view. Many of Maine’s inexpensive sporting camps, at \$125 or less a day, do not fill their rooms. “Maine has always undersold itself. Prices should be re-evaluated,” said Matt Libby, president of Libby Sporting Camps Inc. in Ashland. “The camps themselves think, ‘If I raise the prices too high, I will lose business.’ The reality is that if they don’t raise the price, they will lose business because people think that if the price is low, it can’t be good. ... In other

places in the country, I see half the service and twice the price.” Consumers believe they get what they pay for, so, ironically, reasonable prices work against a quality business trying to give clients a financial break.

Unexpected circumstances frustrate planners, especially if projects were not realistic to start. Rural organizers, strapped for paid help, have found it inefficient to rely on volunteers to do the bulk of promotions. The local economic development council and chambers of commerce tried to implement strategic plans but relied too heavily on volunteers. In the '90s, changing players on Washington County's promotion board led to high levels of frustration. Everyone was overworked. “The development is the big missing piece,” Tilton said. The right planning matrix could bring partners together to add consistency and efficiency to the whole. This is a big task, as the state has struggled with partnership attempts. Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W), hampered by its cash-strapped reality for years, designed signs with L.L. Bean, but the full project was never executed. A matrix, perhaps, could lessen the number of half-done projects by detailing upfront the necessary steps to completion.

ANALYSIS OF THE TWO BLAINE HOUSE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop a Planning Matrix. *This is the first of two sub-goals within implementing sustainable tourism economic development planning. The State Planning Office (SPO), DECD and the Maine Tourism Commission's Natural Resources Committee should develop a planning matrix that considers development in the context of environmental and social carrying capacity with communities and regions using the matrix to develop their tourism economic development blueprints.*

State government, in this recommendation, could pool existing department resources to create tourism economic development blueprints, also known as a planning matrix, as a guide for communities becoming part of the tourism infrastructure. Some elements of a planning matrix could serve as big-picture philosophies while others provide nitty-gritty specifics. Overall, a matrix, it is hoped, could be a tool to give community guidelines, examples and case study models. A thick manual by the University of Minnesota's Tourism Center in Minneapolis acts as a self-help tool for the Midwest state's communities. Its “Community Tourism Development” workbook, modeled on the revered World Tourism Organization vision, provides communities with an understanding of tourism while representing their values. In the

workbook, communities perform an inventory on grid sheets. Minnesota's Office of Tourism decided to make the book part of the state's core plan. Through a product like this, Maine communities can be brought into the tourism fold. Individual towns can decide if they want to embrace tourism along with identifying which resources they want to share and which they do not. In order to build a plan on what already exists, officials should make field visits to gather first-hand knowledge. "Do we want to invest in another hotel or do we want to put flower boxes out?" asked Sheila Jans, senior fellow at the Quebec Labrador Foundation of the Atlantic Center for the Environment at a field desk in Madawaska in the St. John Valley. "This will take a commitment of time." The Maine Office of Tourism and related entities, according to stakeholders, should ask community members how is it that they want to share their towns with others and give people tools to build their future. Shaping the future includes preventing incremental change, stakeholders said. People are hesitant to put actions into effect to address change before it happens. The solution is to be proactive. Community planners must decide what level of development a town wants. Basic questions include: How are you going to build a quality experience? What level of development, such as trash barrels and parking lots, should exist? How will actions be funded? Economists, who typically seek industry growth, have their own questions. Is the goal to have a huge bump in tourism? Would the benefits exceed the costs? Is re-distributing the wealth the solution rather than adding more tourists? "By re-distributing, we can do better than we are now," said Kevin Boyle, Ph. D., professor in Resource Economics and Policy at the University of Maine-Orono, "and take some pressure off those feeling pressured and provide some gains to some towns that need it." By outlining a matrix plan, communities can detail their wishes and weigh the input of experts in the industry.

Crafting Big-Picture Philosophies and Nitty-Gritty Specifics. A planning matrix allows for big-picture elements from regional unity to quality assessment. A strategy could band together communities to network rather than to operate in isolation. In rural areas, in particular, a plan is needed where cohesiveness leads to regional economic benefits. Diverse towns need to complement each other to keep tourists in the area because seasonal highs and lows challenge businesses to keep their doors open. Coordination would create stronger year-round tourism revenues for a region. "The Rangeley area, for example, has been known as a summer area and Sugarloaf as a winter area," Warren said. "By tying the two areas together, it enhances the opportunities of both." Washington County has seen the importance of

creating a regional unity as a way to enhance itself economically. Its leaders have tried to network small tourism operators across the sectors so that more dialogue occurs. “Because the population is so scattered, you can starve based on distance between operators,” Sochasky said. “In Washington County, we network these people, so they have the critical mass to survive. ... We give dispersed businesses a way to tie back in together whether through a physical building or a newsletter.” Regional information points, such as the Downeast Heritage Center, are crucial for entrepreneurs to meet and share strategies.

As a matrix is formed, community aesthetics should be considered, including infrastructure. “A friend of mine said it well: ‘Tourists don’t want to come and see a bunch of poor people.’ Any economic development helps tourism if it helps better standards of living,” Tilton said. Finances could be put toward standard development elements to rid the landscape of the ugliness of roadside waste. Ordinances could clean up these unsightly areas. Some places along Route 1, for example, look terrible, and local planning boards and selectmen have the power through ordinances to control junkyard land use. The tourism matrix could advise these towns by identifying practices that foster successful tourism, like instituting building codes that reflect the historic architecture of the community, instead of instituting conflicting decisions. “Local planning boards want more tourism but also approve a permit for a sewage plant on Route 1,” Tilton said. Standard development can lead to a quality infrastructure like working rest stops, which are needed to serve the most basic needs. Traffic congestion can lead to an ugly mess as well, affecting the quality of the tourist experience. Congested Ellsworth faces unsightly circumstances with 14,000 cars on average traveling back and forth daily in the summer to Acadia National Park. Planning, through a detailed blueprint, could assess current and future traffic pressures. If traffic doubles in 20 years as predicted, the town will need to double the stoplights, service stations and roads. Without attention, a very non-natural park and non-Maine experience will occur from Ellsworth to Bar Harbor. Public works expenses are needed for transitioning and established tourism towns. The cost of building and maintaining public bathrooms, for instance, affects touristy Greenville. Tourists need a variety of facilities, and those facilities cost money to build and operate. “What the town of Greenville owns for infrastructure vs. a non-tourism town like Sangerville is quite different,” said John Simko, Greenville town manager and former Sangerville manager. “We also have to put up two dozen floating docks and maintain certain beach areas and a wharf, playground, gazebo and several small parks. For a town of 1,600 people, it’s a lot to maintain, especially

with all the regular public works.” Maintaining infrastructure can overwhelm a small town. Over time, infrastructure degradation causes communities metaphorically and literally to tack up vinyl for ease and, consequently, lose their culture. Madawaska has seen this happen. “There are Coke signs everywhere,” Jans said. “... I realized that so many of these towns are just trying to survive, so aesthetics and making sure that there are enough hotel rooms are just not in their thinking.” The tourism industry should combat this type of loss through a sustained education campaign to invest in small-town revitalization.

Big-picture philosophies include assessing funding strategies, including establishing or increasing fees to visit recreation land. Mainers prefer access to recreational land be free, like tradition established, but fees can fund the ability to move beyond day-to-day operations to oversee increased visitation while enhancing natural resource quality. Funds for planning and management are needed whether gathered through a per-person fee or another way. If a greater number of tourists come, then charges will have to increase. “Maine traditionally undercharges, and if what we want to offer is a premium experience, then we will have to take care of the natural resource base,” said Jane Arbuckle, director of stewardship at the Maine Coast Heritage Trust in Brunswick. Land trusts, like Arbuckle’s, typically do not charge a fee to recreate on their land. A great deal of controversy exists about a non-profit that charges to visit the 3.5 million acres of commercial forestlands in inland Maine that it oversees. Established in 1971, the North Maine Woods Inc. charges fees to support 65 seasonal employees who have three management issues: hospitality (welcoming people to the Maine woods and relaying directions on and use policies), custodial duties (cleaning campsites and roadsides) and security (taking names and vehicle registration numbers to prevent theft, vandalism and arson to logging equipment and 1,000-plus privately owned camps). The daily \$5 resident or \$8 non-resident fee covers the non-profit’s cost of operating 14 registration stations. The overnight camping fee is an additional \$6 per person per night for both residents and non-residents, contributing \$180,000 annually to campsite maintenance. “Don’t be ashamed to pass on the costs for the resources that we have,” said Albro Cowperthwaite, director of the North Maine Woods Inc. in Ashland. “Raise that \$6 [camping] fee to bring the quality of the resource up.” North Maine Woods officials have been hesitant to initiate a fee hike because the average Mainer backs the idea that the combined \$11 resident or \$14 non-resident fee is too expensive, especially compared to what the state charges to visit state parks. Fees to camp at state sites are \$11 to \$15 resident or \$14 to \$20 non-resident per night per

party. Because the charges are per party, the cost per person could average \$2 resident or \$2.50 non-resident, therefore, five times less expensive.

Tourists should not be the only ones to pay, some said, to maintain Maine's natural landscape. A formal program to tax tourists comes from the seven percent meals and lodging tax. Some believe this to be an unfair way to collect revenue as all people enjoy the landscape, and all should pay to protect the natural resources. "I don't think you should penalize one industry – tourism – with higher taxes to help protect natural resources, like from beach erosion, when all of Maine benefits from natural resources," said Charles Davis, the director for Maine Small Business Development Center and co-director of Coastal Acadia Development Corporation in Ellsworth. Many in the industry feel the meals and lodging tax is misguided when 95 percent of it goes into the General Fund and the other five percent to the Office of Tourism.

Beyond the big-picture comments, a matrix can name the nitty-gritty specifics. Tourism blueprint organizers can think small, as in detailed. Stakeholders share specific ideas that could strengthen the industry or mitigate negative factors:

- **Labor pool:** Make it easier for tourism businesses to access a sufficient labor pool. Adjust fall college schedules to begin after Labor Day to fit the prime tourism season. An art gallery owner hiring college students finds schools let students out too early in the summer and take them away too early in the fall. "A lot of kids get out of school in mid-May, and there are no jobs for them at this time of the year," said Eric Hopkins, a North Haven Island gallery owner. "I tell them that I'll need them to work through Labor Day, and they say, 'Yeah, ok,' and then they realize that they have to get to college orientation." If universities do not adjust the school schedule, the industry could support hiring local seniors or overseas workers. Big Moose Inn, Cabins & Campground in Millinocket, struggling with a local labor shortage, brings in foreign college students, through the Alliance's Abroad program, on visas. Eager-to-work students become housekeepers for four months.
- **Tiered taxes:** As tourism increases in an area, the fear is that it will take over the landscape. Working land can become crowded out. To compensate, the state should tax working land at a lower rate as rising land prices affect fishermen and foresters' abilities to continue to own land. An

amendment to the Constitution of Maine authorizing the legislature to assess waterfront property, used for commercial fishing activities, by the land's current use passed on a 2005 ballot. "The small lobsterman who owns a small land front has to pay higher land taxes and cannot afford it," Davis said. "We need a tiered-tax system where working waterfront land would be taxed at a lower rate than other land." Because tourists come to see Maine's working landscape, it needs to be protected.

- **Service work:** State tourism incentives come in forms other than cash, especially in this time of severe budget shortfalls. The state could involve youth to build and maintain trails and infrastructure on Maine's pristine natural resources in exchange for future college credit. "Most kids today do not know what [community] is all about," said Varney, who grew up raking lawns and doing other community work in her family of 10. "I truly believe that if we say that each junior and senior is required to do 10 hours of service ... then each 10 hours of service after that is worth a college credit. Make it appealing and fun with an incentive."

Studying Environmental vs. Social Carrying Capacity. In 1974 when tourists numbered less than a quarter of today's level, the Maine Vacation Travel Analysis Committee reported tourist masses to have real consequences. "Congestion is the primary cause of serious social and environmental impact," the committee said. "Crowding of beaches, roads, and parks by non-residents creates social resentment among residents. Concentrated activities endanger the environment" (Maine Vacation Travel Analysis Committee, 1974). Since this time, Maine has become more crowded. The coastal corridor from Kittery to Mount Desert Island suffers severe summer congestion, hosting more than 20 million tourists from July through September (Vail, 2003). Plus, three-fourths of all tourists visit the coast and close to half visit in July through September (Maine Office of Tourism, 2002). "If you try climbing to the top of Cadillac Mountain [in Acadia National Park] in the summer, you might as well be in Tokyo," said Urquhart, referring to the Japanese capital's 14,000 people per square kilometer. A growing understanding of carrying capacities – how many people can comfortably visit a particular site – has occurred in Maine and throughout the world. Carrying capacities involve a certain subjectivity because what one person might find environmentally worrisome, another will not. What one tourist might define as too crowded socially, another will not. The quandary becomes: What level of tourism can be

tolerated? Other natural resource industries consider this same carrying capacity question. In the logging industry, for example, timber managers seek a harvest level that can be sustained indefinitely. “Ask what kind of use can you tolerate without destroying the resource from regenerating itself,” said Dave Field, Ph. D., chair of the University of Maine’s Department of Forest Management, noting how complicated tourism is in this regard. Once an undefined threshold is crossed, however, people react.

Stakeholders, proud of the state’s environmental history thanks to legacies of politicians such as Ed Muskie and George Mitchell, react to environmental threats be it compacted fragile soils due to heavy foot traffic or wildlife population decreases due to hunting. Tourism can overwhelm the natural resources and the related industries that depend on them. “The tourism industry of the state is based on the natural resources,” Sochasky said, “and that relationship is going in a direction that may or may not be good for the natural resources. We risk losing that relationship.” To combat environmental degradation before it happens, some national parks like the Grand Canyon shut down road traffic into fragile habitats and restrict travel only to park-run buses. Maine tourism stakeholders support restrictions, too. Maine’s industry has slowly come to favor carrying capacity restrictions. Maine’s mantra, therefore, might evolve into: The more solitude, the better off tourism is. The Maine Association of Sea Kayak Guides and Instructors (MASKGI), a well-known Maine non-profit group, goes so far as to ask its members to voluntarily reduce tour groups to avoid crowding. “The end result is still a volunteer system with no island police out there,” said Natalie Springuel, marine extension associate for Maine Sea Grant, “which is the part that a lot of other states are looking to Maine for because it’s a huge financial involvement.” Baxter State Park institutes restrictions because intense visitation could jeopardize the ecological and social quality of the experience. Standards, some stakeholders have indicated, need to be enforced without hesitation. The tourism industry shouldn’t continue to allow uncontrolled numbers of visitors to a given area due to fear of public backlash to enforcement. “The number who want to climb Katahdin is of prime concern for the mountain,” said Irvin Caverly, director of Baxter State Park in Millinocket. “Our park is not a zoo where animals are tied up, and you can come see them. It’s a wilderness to experience.” Tourists who do pass through the entrance station and hike to the top of Katahdin benefit from the remote experience, and so will those tourists who are turned away to return on another day to get the same pay-off. “Baxter is a good model in that it fills up and only so many people are there in a day,” Walker said. “It’s ok that it has limits, and it’s ok if they’re not

getting in.” Baxter State Park’s visitors respect the park’s management decisions, for instance, to protect the resource by controlling the number of daily visitors allowed to hike Mt. Katahdin. This requires hikers to arrive before 5 in the morning to ensure they make it through the gates.

Tourism entrepreneurs support environmental efforts with firm resolve, especially within the hospitality industry. Inn owners, once known for being environmentally naive, have looked at the landscape in a new way, realizing that they profit from buying into environmentalism. The Oakland House Seaside Resort in Brooksville supports environmental organizations, such as the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA), by displaying the logo in its lobby even though it receives no remuneration. The spreading of stewardship messages serves as its own reward. Sunday River Inn in Newry reaches out to prominent environmental organizations, such as the National Wildlife Federation, which held its national summit camp there in 2003. “We had 600 families, and the federation hired all the guides they could scrape up from around the area,” said Steve Wight, owner of Sunday River Inn. “We went out on trips from photographing wildlife to kayaking.” Plus, inn owners are joining Trout Unlimited and working toward better fishing opportunities in the area. Hospitality businesses assist by following environmentally friendly management philosophies. Clients are encouraged to avoid killing or overhunting wildlife through a praising of catch-and-release principles believed to protect the resource. Weatherby’s inn guests kill fish to eat on the spot for lunch but do not kill more to take home. “I would consider the catch-and-release stream as a viable management project,” McEvoy said. “In my opinion, there is no reason someone should kill a fish; you can buy it in the grocery store cheaper. For those who want to kill fish, they can kill all they want in certain waters.” Entrepreneurs seek a quality environment in which to offer tourists.

Recently, experts have put the focus on social carrying capacities, not considered as concrete a philosophy. Social carrying capacity has defined the work of a few academics. The University of Vermont’s Robert Manning, Ph. D., who contracts with the National Park Service including at Acadia National Park, photographs scenic spots and digitally manipulates these images to add more and more people to show study participants and then gauge their reactions to crowding. How does crowding affect how people perceive the landscape? If looking out from a serene vista onto the landscape, does one other person’s existence there with you hurt the experience? How about 100 people standing beside you? Stakeholders want visitors to see Maine’s great places but desire more analysis to determine crowding

impacts because factors can make an emotional difference to visitors. Driving in Maine can be a bumper-to-bumper traffic nightmare, and, ironically, most people come to Maine to get away from the congestion. Sustainable tourism can be enjoyed when negatives of mass tourism, such as crowding, do not exist. Guides were the most vocal about the social effects of crowding. One guide, who avoids the Allagash River during the summer season, can offer a quality experience on the St. John River. He can go off to an area that is out of sight of other canoeists. “We can make a wild place in a confined area,” said Garrett Conover, owner of North Woods Ways guiding business, in Willimantic. Guides are accused them of harming social carrying capacities even though they depend on the authenticity of the wilderness. They are told by environmentalists or managers that they are responsible for making areas more crowded, thereby, hurting the solitude of the tourism experience for the remainder of visitors. Commercial users in the Allagash are accused of posing problems, said Gil Gilpatrick, a retired canoe guide from Skowhegan and author of several Allagash Wilderness Waterway books. Gilpatrick doesn’t believe commercial users pose problems nor that the Allagash’s carrying capacity is worse today. “The overall use, from my point of view, is that [the Allagash] was more crowded in the ’70s than it is now,” Gilpatrick said. Ultimately, an appropriate carrying capacity plan could address both ecological and social levels.

2. Perform a SWOT Analysis. *This is the second of two sub-goals within implementing sustainable tourism economic development planning. In a planning matrix, economic development districts, councils of government and regional tourism districts need to define strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.*

Note to Readers: An example SWOT analysis has been done to sense how one aspect of Maine’s tourism landscape could be categorized. Comments on niche recreation have been broken down into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and are included as Appendix C.

This recommendation asks Maine’s tourism players to identify industry elements as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to plan appropriately. Stakeholders, including those interviewed, do not preface comments with a SWOT categorization, of course, but meanings can be interpreted. Researchers need to be flexible because fluent tourism professionals can switch from one SWOT category

to another within the same sentence. What the assistant director of the Office of Tourism said about inland Maine could be viewed as an opportunity or as a weakness: “We need to address the underutilization, look at the natural resources available and the community attitudes in that area,” Bowditch said, “and embrace a tourism product.” Most comments on tourism issues – such as access, infrastructure, education, economics and stewardship – reveal industry weaknesses. Stakeholders, typically, elaborate on the causes of those problems rather than naming solutions. A grass-roots state like Maine might be weighted more heavily with weaknesses than strengths. Only by defining a problem can solutions begin to be found; therefore, it’s worth noting a handful of the weaknesses facing the industry:

- **High Taxes:** High coastal property taxes put businesses out of business. “We have a half-mile of shorefront, and we are due for a re-evaluation in the next few years,” said Sally M. Littlefield, co-owner of the Oakland House Seaside Resort in Brooksville. “We think we will see an enormous jump in our real estate. I don’t know if we’ll be able to stay in business for the long haul, and here we are training [my stepdaughter] to be the next generation at the inn.”
- **Geographic Polarity:** Tourism leaders need to acknowledge two different Maines exist with one in the north and one in the south. Each faces separate challenges. “I think there is a growing anxiety of that split,” Jans said. “Southern Maine is having to address an issue on sprawl, and the north is like, ‘Hell, we are empty up here.’”
- **Intolerance toward Industries:** Many people, including new residents, feel their lives are disrupted by the working natural resource industries. Out-of-staters buy a house in the fishing village but then dislike having a working harbor as their front yard. “I have loved to hear the start of a lobster boat go off at 4 a.m. because it’s part of my history here,” said Davis, who lives on the coast in Gouldsboro. “Now that the N.Y. family is here, they want to pull up the ladder and say that it is disturbing to them.”
- **Sprawl:** Tourism can lead to sprawl and destroy the landscape. “Developed recreation is contributing to sprawl and eating up the countryside,” Boyle said. “It’s become a stop-at-the-shops as you go along Route 1. This will be detrimental. In the long run, people want scenic beauty, and tourism’s sprawl is cutting into this. This is a broader issue than just tourism

because it is the sprawl that has helped create this land-use mismanagement that all of us as residents have contributed to.”

- **Seasonal Operations:** The tourism industry should devise how to even out visitation and create stronger shoulder seasons with off-season events. “I do half of my income in the month of June,” McEvoy said about his Grand Lake Stream inn, “which leaves an incredible opportunity for the other five months that I am open.”
- **Low Wages.** Poor salaries have been a consistent criticism of the tourism industry. Specific proposals can build in visitors who have more disposable income and will in turn raise the average tourism employee’s paycheck. “The surf person is in the places where there is mass tourism,” Urquhart said. “At Grand Lake Stream in Maine, there is not the surf class. It has the highest number of Maine guides in any town in Maine.” As an indirect benefit, tourist dollars go toward gas and general services that raise the economic level for all who live here.

Additional negatives exist, of course, within the industry but at the fault of the industry. Tourism, like any business, has the ability to change or damage a community. When tourism season arrives, communities change from quiet places to hustle-and-bustle locales greeting outsiders who have no respect for Maine values. “How can we encourage tourism without destroying what we like most about Maine like the sense of community?” Varney asked. “How can we maintain that sense of place while entertaining three or four months of people who are different than you?” Tourist influx can destroy a sense of place because outsiders might attempt to push their values on those traditional communities. A small percentage of tourists decided to buy their own little piece of Maine; therefore, the make-up of a community can change. Many look to build camps on the outskirts of town, which creates sprawl and stresses the community’s ability to provide town services to an expanded region. The Greenville town manager views the insurgence of new residents, especially seasonal ones, as creating year-round pressure on some woods roads meant to be used only in the summer months for camps. The philosophy of “loving to death” has become a reality in the North Maine Woods. “A person first visits, then owns a camp and then lives here year round,” Simko said. “The idea is that it’s wild and rare and you better get in with your checkbook if you want to buy a piece.” Weatherby’s inn regularly has guests request the name of a good real estate agent. The best deal financially for the tourist, however, might be to stay in an existing lodging rather than own a cabin used one

week of the year. “I just had a guest who is a numbers-cruncher and said that it’s a bad idea to buy a camp due to the maintenance costs and upkeep,” McEvoy said. “He has it cheaper to come to my place and spend \$2,000. It’s the smart economic decision.” Tourist influx can have a negative effect but so can factors that are more loosely associated with tourism.

Conservation, generally thought of a good thing especially for tourism, can leave strapped Maine communities with a reduction in their tax base because non-profits do not have to pay town property taxes for current real estate or new acquisitions. This leads to financial stresses on communities that depend on that tax revenue for day-to-day operations. Some townspeople, therefore, disapprove of a land trust’s existence within their borders. Conserved lands, particularly if acquired by fee, tend to come off the tax roles. The headline-grabbing controversy has led many land trusts to pay town taxes even though they are not legally required to do so. Blue Hill Heritage Trust is one that did pay because it did not want its conserved-status lands to be a drain but rather a support for a town’s budget. Still, regarding tax-exempt status, conservation organizations are looked at with askance. “The state needs to look at tax issues so towns are clear when a property can be tax exempt,” Arbuckle said, “and so that organizations doing this conservation work are not always on the defensive.” As a side note, small land trusts might have to choose between paying taxes and caring for the land. This is because management of conserved lands takes a lot of funds. Maine should recognize this conflict in its forthcoming planning matrix.

All these types of weaknesses should be documented as part of a statewide SWOT analysis. Yet, before doing a SWOT, Mainers must open their minds to tourism to see the opportunities in front of them. Local economic development organizations can open attitudes and build tourism on a grass-roots level. The Piscataquis County Economic Development Council, partly due to the earlier work of The Maine Highlands, is leading a charge to be a regional model in developing sustainable tourism by bringing relevant parties together to inventory assets. In December 2004, it approved the Piscataquis Tourism Task Force, which contains nine leaders from various communities in the county among its membership (Piscataquis Tourism Task Force, 2005).

By doing a SWOT analysis, stakeholders believe communities can seek balance. Some believe part of this balance will be to encourage Mainers to change their attitudes, such as developing tolerance for crowds rather than automatically saying an area is too crowded. “It’s hard to direct people to certain places

because someone will say that there are already too many people there,” said Richard Anderson, the former commissioner of the Department of Conservation (DOC). Visitation fears perpetuate closed attitudes, leading to hiding Maine’s scenic spots without any real scientific proof of danger. Bucky Owen, the former commissioner of IF&W, believes current carrying capacity does not pressure resources, even on the coast. A tourism plan should not put in place restrictions that detract so much from the experience that people want to stop doing it. “It’s not to avoid shooting a deer so that there is one more deer to photograph,” Polstein said. “It’s striking a reasonable balance.” To achieve balance, communities must inventory assets and development levels. Use and conservation of world-class resources, like the Penobscot River, will need to occur at the same time by the same people. Maine’s downhill skiing industry touts its ability simultaneously to use and conserve wilderness. Ski towns restrict development to a small number of acres on one mountain while leaving the rest pristine. “We are probably a prime example of the great American neighborhood,” said Greg Sweetser, executive director of the non-profit Ski Maine in Portland. “We develop a community with centralizing much of our development. You are in the middle of the wilderness and find a ski resort in the middle of a village. People find this odd, but we have condensed all of our development.” Stakeholders, perhaps by doing a SWOT analysis, will better compromise in order to do best for the community as a whole.

RELATED TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The two Blaine House recommendations overlook outside factors needed for a sustainable tourism plan. This section discusses stakeholders’ comments on these factors: Giving Regions Power over Their Marketing Image; Strengthening Community Authenticity; Creating the Right Amount of Infrastructure; and Building Cooperation between Natural Resource Industries.

Giving Regions Power over Their Marketing Image. Tourism regions need better marketing and coordination. Each of Maine’s eight state-designated tourism regions receives approximately \$80,000 a year to spend on marketing. Some of the vast regions, like Aroostook County, do not find those promotion dollars sufficient for high-quality content or logistical concerns like brochure distribution. Maine’s regional marketing translates into pretty-picture regional booklets with lots of ad space and little natural resource

information. “When you go to I-95 visitor centers, you see brochures set up by ‘region’ and ‘activity,’” said Ken Spalding, the Maine Woods project coordinator of RESTORE: The North Woods in Hallowell. “The individual regions have put out booklets, but everything is a compilation of ads and there is no use of the natural resources as an attraction.” Regions would benefit from products that document their richness. Those critical of the bland marketing content believe the state’s rich landscape has stories of place to tell. Inland Maine heritage includes cultural stories of Native Americans, early explorers, early loggers and artisans. Henry David Thoreau made three trips inland. Teddy Roosevelt climbed Katahdin. The most famous landscape artists, when they wanted wilderness, came to Maine. The Hancock County Cultural Directory, backed by the Lila Wallace Reader’s Digest Fund, sells sense of place in its Maine Arts Commission-printed directory containing poets to painters. Power over marketing should allow regions to promote things to do in all corners of its boundaries, similar to New Brunswick’s Day Adventure Program.

Within the eight tourism regions, communities function on little money with no staff and no coordination of marketing within a region. “That person isn’t there,” said Tilton, referring to Washington County being paired with Hancock County as an official tourism region. Without a real coordinator, rural Washington County becomes overshadowed by Hancock County’s powerful Acadia National Park area in Bar Harbor that’s promoted as the only Downeast destination. The result is that Washington County becomes a sublayer instead of an equal partner to tourist-trafficked Hancock County. Economic development organizations try to pick up the slack but cannot do this always. The Sunrise County Economic Council in Machias, which has assisted the tourism cause, can’t be expected to do it alone anymore. The organization does not have enough resources to coordinate the marketing that needs to get done for Washington County. Rural areas are at a real disadvantage when packaging and promoting their tourism product. “I would suspect that if you look at the regions of the state that are banking on the primitive experience, they are the ones who don’t have a lot of resources to market,” said Tilton, who questions who will pay for the marketing. “In Washington County, we have this incredible opportunity to promote recreation on a pristine, historic river, but where is the money going to come from?” Tilton asked. “If they say we should protect this land because it will help tourism, then they damn well better back it up with money for tourism promotion. They’ll wave the tourism flag knowing that we’ll never have the money

to promote. The ‘they’ here includes the conservation groups.” Part of letting communities make local decisions is to empower them with the necessary tools, such as the finances.

Existing marketing is questioned not only for its content but also for its accuracy. Many view Maine’s ads as untruthful because the state promotes itself as a wilderness when most of tourism covers multi-use areas. “If you are going to promise wilderness, you’ve got to deliver wilderness,” St. Pierre said. “The focus is on wilderness but it’s a bait-and-switch because it’s a working forest. Every successful tourism effort that I’ve seen has played on one specific point like the history of the area or the wilderness. You evoke an image, but when you get there, it is a working forest.” As a literal dollar-and-cents issue, tourism entrepreneurs depend on wilderness as a business landscape to sell their experience. Maine should not promote something, like pure wilderness or a rustic boat trip, if it can’t deliver. One windjammer entrepreneurs told customers that his cruise was going to a deserted island but arrived to find 30 people already there. “If we want to give this perceived wilderness experience, then we have to keep it as wilderness,” said Kip Files, owner of the Victory Chimes schooner out of Rockland. If the mythical wilderness is overpromoted, businesses will lose money in the end because tourists will not return. One sporting camp owner decided to stop promoting wilderness and the idea that you can shoot a huge moose but rather promotes the quality of the experience, and that if you are lucky, you might get a big one. One guide foregoes particular popular canoe routes in the height of the season because the crowds exceed the “wild” solitude that he markets to his clients. One landscape artist erases cell phone towers and other unsightly development in his paintings of Maine as it once was. Landscape artists, loudly proclaiming wilderness protection in order to have development-free landscapes, find modern infrastructure gets in the way of their imagery. “I edit stuff out, like lobster boats and buoys and things when I’m painting,” said Hopkins, crediting preservation efforts that avoid a sliced-and-diced landscape. The images, or ads, of Maine need to market a truthful image rather than an image Maine wishes it could be.

Strengthening Community Authenticity. Tourism planning must be examined from a community point of view because tourism experiences happen within communities,. Sustainable tourism planning emphasizes buy-in from a local community, and tourism experiences, ideally, should promote an understanding of the area’s environment and heritage. Tourism employees should be local, when possible,

because locals know and understand the community's legacy better than outsiders. The community, as a whole, can decide its role in sustainable tourism and how to ensure only appropriate tourism development. Appropriate, or authentic, tourism will fit a community's past, present and future, and businesses need to blend with that region's heritage whether a pristine wilderness or a working landscape. Rural communities, sometimes unsure of tourism, can know what they have to offer is different from urban settings but are no less interesting to the right tourist. Communities should not hide from their rural traits but should encourage self-discovery by the tourist. "There are areas in Washington County that I find as really magical," Jans said, "but I do this because I'm willing to explore and am not looking for someone to entertain me or a place to [lay down] my head. Part of this is that we can't apologize for what we are." Mainers need to be diligent about offering the nature connection to visitors instead of low-rate shopping malls. "We can't generate (in Maine) the amount of shopping malls in New Jersey," said Andy Kekacs, the publisher/owner of the electronic newsletter "Maine Woodsman." "We need to say that value of living in a small community with clean resources is something tourists take back."

The tourism industry is proud the working landscape is still a real Maine place. Not only does it fit Maine's traditional image but should be, according to many stakeholders, a competitive tourism advantage. Agriculture factors into the landscape with its cow pastures and vegetable stands, and agritourism feeds Maine's sustainable tourism image. Open Farm Day, an annual state event, increases a sense of community while showing the importance of agriculture. Each month could have an Open Farm Day with a different emphasis, such as apples, tomatoes, maple syrup, potatoes and others. Most farmers are eager to diversify with agritourism events, but some diversify only when they feel financially desperate to do so. "When a dairy farm does something else to diversify, there can be a culture that says, 'You couldn't make it as a dairy farm,'" she said. "We need to change this culture so that diversification is supported." The Office of Tourism can assist all the natural resource industries by suggesting diversification techniques.

If open to tourism, communities can see their potential and members can pull together to build on their authentic aspects. Many regions, especially in western Maine, have done this to attract diverse tourists. Newry has embraced rock hounding, for instance. The DOC's Bureau of Geology and Natural Areas got behind the LMF board to buy a mineral park there. In 1972, this spot had the richest tourmaline find in 100 years. "Through recognizing more of our natural resources," Wight said, "we are finding that

the things we have taken for granted are very interesting to people who live in other areas that don't have these resources." Communities should tell the many stories of their larger region. Two sides of a river, even a river that separates two countries, can be considered one community. The St. John River residents have shown how it's possible to promote themselves to tourists as one destination. "The St. John River is an international boundary," Jans said, "but it tells a lot of stories about the people living on its shores. It's almost like a cultural metaphor of how people have connected with rivers as a way of telling a story. Many people who live in its watershed come together."

Success will come from letting regions define themselves, stakeholder said. The prevailing notion is that Mainers want to do it their way and want government, especially the federal government, to stay out of the decision-making process. Grass-roots stakeholders become nervous when the state starts telling them what to do. For this reason, tourism strategies should lean toward informal local coordination rather than formal state policy. Keeping decisions local gives power to the regions to shape tourism through more than marketing. The eight designated regions do not have a lot of authority other than to distribute marketing grant money. Planning, development and promotion within those regions must be based on how those areas define themselves, not how the Office of Tourism defines them. It will be important that the office respect local decisions, stakeholders said, without pressuring communities to change to be like other areas.

Communities, as part of the planning process, need to decide what industries should be part of their authentic selves. East Penobscot Bay, a few years ago, became frustrated by pressures to become an aquaculture region. Residents, who wanted to stay as a tourist area, unified their voices against potential pens to raise finfish. The East Penobscot Bay Environmental Alliance members said finfish farming would be unsightly for coastal tourism businesses relying on the aesthetic beauty of the bay to attract visitors. The 400 alliance members – owners of shore property, island property, business people and private individuals – developed a bay management plan that proved the negative water-quality effects that would ensue from finfish farming. Their vocal unification caused an interested aquaculture business to quietly walk away in early 2004. At this time, Littlefield, who owns an inn on the bay, had taken it upon herself to visit out-of-state coastal communities to understand their aquaculture models. "My husband and I toured the East Coast recently to study salmon farms," she said. "There are communities that feel salmon is part of their communities and that they want to support it. [Fin-fish farming] is not how we derive our living, which is

primarily from tourism and the timber industries.” East Penobscot Bay discouraged aquaculture and continues to promote itself as a traditional tourism region. In the above case, tourism existed prior to the proposal to increase the role of another natural resource industry. An equal number of problems exists for communities when non-tourism natural resource industries face an increased tourism proposal. If new tourism development excludes certain recreational activities, tourism’s presence cannot be merged with an area’s existing natural resource industries, some stakeholders said. This refers primarily to RESTORE’s Maine Woods National Park proposal in inland Maine. People in the hinterlands have made money partly from niche tourism activities – such as hunting, snowmobiling and ATV riding – but view a national park as closing land to those recreational activities. “It would be more than an economic shock,” Warren said. “It would be a culture shock.” Community members indicate that they would not respond well to the shift in industries.

Communities remain authentic by deciding which resources they want to share with the public. If communities want to keep certain areas for themselves, they have the right to do so. Under sustainable tourism principles, the industry must follow townspeople’s wishes. A community might decide to keep a nearby fishing hole or a sand beach as a private playground. Jonesport, for example, invited the Office of Tourism to its town to investigate its tourism options. When tourism officials walked onto a beautiful white sand beach that they wanted to promote, the townspeople instructed them not to. They said they didn’t want to share it with outsiders. The office respected that local decision, and local leaders did, too.

Overall, without guidance on what’s appropriate, it’s difficult for communities to build on their authenticity. Dwindling rural communities sometimes do not protect their culture or see value in it. And, a region’s culture, surprisingly, can work against retaining heritage. The Acadian people, who value simplicity and cleanliness, tear down rather than re-build an old barn when it begins to fall apart. Inevitable change, however, typically refers to sprawling urbanization that reshapes a community into something other than what it was. Many nature-based locales in Maine’s tourism past were known for being quaint but have turned into hectic pit stops devoid of nature. “The poster child of failure is Boothbay Harbor that turned from a quaint fishing village into a tourist nightmare,” Urquhart said. “Anyone who wants nature-based experiences in Boothbay is out of luck.” Scattered communities are home to frustrated townspeople who lack the energy and finances to make infrastructure improvements to promote a community’s identity.

One stakeholder suggested northeastern Maine might benefit from bilingual signs to highlight its Acadian roots. “You often hear, ‘Well, nobody comes here anyway, so why should we bother?’” Jans said. “There has to be a way of showing people a way of making a difference and here is why (it’s important to do so). Here we have bilingualism. We are trying to encourage people to be proud of it and to have both languages in their signs.” Towns should minimize change because it has a way of intrinsically tainting them.

Creating the Right Amount of Infrastructure. Infrastructure can be a difficult assignment because the right amount never exists. Too much allows hordes of people to access an area, causing carrying capacity issues, and too little keeps an area underutilized, leading to little to no interpretation or access. Mainers generally choose to err on the side of minimal infrastructure, perhaps, simply by default because if no planning occurs, no building results. Some level of increased infrastructure, generally, can add to the attractiveness of a community and the ability to enjoy an area, even a primitive one. Towns should wait to encourage tourism, some said, until the infrastructure exists. A sufficient number of campsites, for instance, should be built before promoting more use of the interior woods. “When we have even the minimal facilities at these sites,” said Gary Donovan, wildlife biologist for International Paper in Bucksport, “then it says ‘welcome.’” The creation of basic infrastructure components, like lean-tos and trails, lends the idea that a quality experience can be achieved even through a minimally built environment.

Building Regional Information Points. A need for information centers exists, as gaining details on Maine’s complex landscape is not an easy task particularly if traveling in a rural region. Tourists can be seen on the side of the road struggling with maps and desiring to stop for assistance to find out things to do in the area. “I came down the Golden Road with out-of-state cars with their ‘Gazetteers’ trying to figure out where they are,” Owen said, “and there is no where to stop to ask.” Providing in-depth information centers in gateway communities, like Calais’ Downeast Heritage Center or in Greenville’s proposed Natural Resource Education Center, could allow the tourism industry to greet and disperse people in different directions within a large region. Other states, such as Alaska, use consolidated information and interpretation points to disperse tourists successfully. A theater in downtown Anchorage plays films about the outlying Denali National Park and shares information on towns around Anchorage with some three or four hours away. When traveling, Alaska tourists know what to expect along planned routes. “You know

there is not a hotel in sight, so you don't look for one. You know there are no restaurants, so you bring a snack," said Tilton, who has visited Alaska. "It adds value to a primitive natural resources tourism experience when you have all this information centralized in one place. The alternative would be all these billboards that sort of detract from what you say you are." Dissemination of information to travelers in rural regions provides challenges.

Ideas exist for creative Maine information centers. Some Mainers discuss an inland national park as a way to provide an information destination while spreading traffic throughout the northern tier of the state. To get to the park, tourists would have to go through the rest of Maine leaving a trail of money along their path. Maine's inland gateway towns, it's argued, need a big attraction like a park to really get the tourism benefit because there are natural limits to how much they can take advantage of tourism without this. RESTORE points to Thomas Power's 2001 report to underscore the financial potential of a its plan (Power, 2001). "Communities around national parks," St. Pierre said, "are doing better than the national average." In addition, L.L. Bean's role as an information center should not be underestimated. As what is said to be the No. 1 tourist destination, Bean in Freeport could link thousands of visitors with smaller entrepreneurs, many of whom the company has teamed with to sell outdoor trips. Visitors, while at Bean, could shape the remainder of their trip through suggestions that disperse them into all corners of the state. Bean, a few stakeholders said, should be recognized potentially as the state's most visible tourism information center.

Planned driving loops could be the answer to take tourists to parts of the state that they would not have discovered otherwise. Let tourism brochures guide visitors to various parts of the state so congested locations are alleviated and locations desiring tourism receive more traffic. Areas seeking tourists, such as Rangeley and Greenville, can profit greatly if designed with a certain level of infrastructure to welcome tourists. Businesses in remote locations struggle to capture potential customers because tools do not exist to move tourists throughout the state. This leads to competition among entrepreneurs, such as the rafters, who cut prices that results in further weakening the industry. Plenty of room exists for development to assist remote entrepreneurs. Inland tourism potential, according to the Appalachian Mountain Club, can expand with world-class experiences free of negatives of a mass tourism experience. The AMC, often asked about long-distance hiking options off the trail, increases backcountry recreation. Loop trail systems add family-

friendly options, including hiking, backpacking and paddling, in the North Maine Woods can infuse small towns with new income.

Being Upfront with Tourists. Tourists need upfront destination information, no matter what the infrastructure level, in order to guide them to select the right location for their physical abilities. Communities, especially poor rural ones, face the responsibility to talk honestly about themselves. A community should prepare visitors for a primitive experience by telling them of the reality beforehand. “I don’t think you send a family from Boston to Bigelow,” Walker said. “You tell people ahead of time what the facilities are like, and then those people are prepared. It’s fine that the infrastructure is not there. You just need to say that there won’t be a Port-A-Potty for four miles.” While encouraging communities to embrace appropriate development, a false advertising message should not be presented to lure tourists to a community. Businesses, when talking with inquiring tourists, need to be honest about the experience available. Businesses do best to place tourists at a location to make the tourist the most comfortable within the region. Sustainable tourism embraces the big picture to keep a tourist in the region rather than at a specific business in the region. “There are people who can appreciate the area but still might not feel comfortable in our particular business, so we try to keep them in the area but better serve their needs,” said Wight of the Sunday River Inn in Newry. “We have an active chamber of commerce and an active innkeeper association that provides us enough information on our fellow businesses that it allows us informally to answer their questions.” Little infrastructure can shock unknowing tourists and cause them never to return to Maine or, at least, to an area within Maine again. By being upfront, tourists will be educated. This is essential because some less-knowledgeable visitors might not understand what it means to prepare for a day in the Maine woods. Details need to be spelled out, such as to bring a rain suit even on a sunny day.

Adding Infrastructure Selectively. The thought behind minimal infrastructure is that it will balance needs rather than cause or lead to other development problems. Stakeholders gravitate toward the idea of minimal infrastructure because it fits Maine’s landscape and, equally important, does not overwhelm or change it. Historically this has been of concern. The Allagash Wilderness Waterway, for example, has a contentious infrastructure history. Many residents believe inappropriate design flaws resulted in infrastructure that did not match the natural setting. Some feel misled about the generic design

of Churchill Dam, erected by government without effort to mesh with the pristine environment.

Stakeholders are still angry about what they call infrastructure that never should have happened. Where the dam sits within the waterway, there had been a previous structure built to resemble an old log-building dam. When multiple layers of government decided to re-build the dam, the generic approach was taken. Seeing a need to limit infrastructure, obviously, fits Maine's standards.

Today and in the future, communities should design infrastructure to blend in with the environment. If gaudy chain stores begin to dot the landscape, Maine will lose its quaint sense of place. "We'll have Home Depots everywhere, and I don't know how to balance this," Files said. "People want to see a lighthouse and not a CVS drug store that they have at home. You can have that CVS, but let's make it look like it belongs. In Freeport, you see a McDonald's that blends in." Freeport is proud to have its McDonald's with white clapboards. Blending can be accomplished through a building's color, size or position on a lot. To have success, community members might approach issues in less mainstream ways. Builders often think to build something as big as possible when, perhaps, what is needed in a community will be of a small stature. "From the controversies I've heard about, the state needs to work small, not just big," Arbuckle said. "It needs to have the capabilities legally to put in a small boat launch without a 50-car parking lot, so people know that if a launch goes into my neighborhood that it won't be huge and destroy the character." Community officials need to push for what's appropriate. Stakeholders believe in minimizing infrastructure for aesthetic and ecological reasons. Many areas across the country that follow sustainable tourism principles place interpretative information at an off-site location as a means to protect the natural resources at the site. Interpretive displays for St. Croix Island, for example, sit on the mainland for visitors to read while gazing out onto the historic island full of fragile archeological ruins. When development exists at an off-site location, then less is needed at the actual site.

A general fear of too much infrastructure, even of the most basic sort, exists: namely toilets and roads. Infrastructure can bring, surprisingly, tense discussions. Should privies or picnic tables exist, for instance, within a wilderness setting? The existence of any amenities will lead to more amenity demands, some entrepreneurs fear, that might not blend in. "I am in favor of privies on the side of the river," Conover said, "but I am not in favor of picnic tables because they are like TVs, like they are always on. ... For a premier canoe route, you should have established sites and campfire areas and then just [privy] boxes on

the side of the river that can be moved.” A sporting camp owner, who favors putting logging roads to bed, sells the wilderness experience to clients. This stakeholder is concerned that visitors not drive into the woods. “Most hunters don’t want to hunt because of ‘good access’ because they have that at home. They want to feel like they are getting away from it all,” Libby said. “... I want to walk into it.” The more infrastructure, the more it impacts on the landscape. Roads allow for development to take place, it is believed. Few ordinances prevent commercial development along rural roads as more people travel and demand more amenities. Travelers then develop an attitude of entitlement not existing decades ago. “When there were no roads in the northern state of Maine, you put your canoe on a railroad car and when you got to Jo-Mary Lake you asked the conductor to stop the train and your vacation was suffering your way back out of the woods,” Wight said. “Now we have roads in this area, and people driving a Winnebago feel like they should have all sorts of services like getting on the phone and ordering pizza.” Beyond commercial development, roads offer opportunities for camp residences to slip in and dot the landscape. In the unorganized territories where large landowners sell off lots, camps are built quickly. Regional officials do not think of sprawl’s eventual effects, but they will as new residents propose bigger infrastructure needs. Through roads, pressure will be on areas to maintain more residences year round.

Building Cooperation Between Natural Resource Industries. Tourism shares the landscape with other industries – agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture – with historically important cultural ties to Maine. Working land, to Mainers, is part of the state’s identity, and to tourists, it is part of Maine’s attraction. Tourists visit because of quaint communities that are anything but manufactured. In inland regions, logging trucks are part of the experience; on the coast, lobster boats are. The relationship between the natural resource industries, as so intertwined, needs to be congenial. Facets of the industries compliment each other. Timber harvesting, for example, provides openings to see moose in the woods and roads provide rafters access to rivers. Despite the intellectually understood benefits of working together, natural resource industries go their own way in an attempt to survive a tough economy. Ideally, one use, like tourism, will not negatively impact another, like forestry.

Diverging Efforts Play Out. Recreation, many times, has not been compatible with the other natural resource industries in working forest or waterfront locations. Industries compete with each other

instead of join together. “When you see someone parked on a corner looking for a moose and see a logging truck on the road ... this causes a lot of chaos,” said Paul Fichtner, owner of Big Lake Equipment in Greenville and of Penobscot Lake Lodge northwest on the Canadian border. “The logger has just burnt up his breaks trying to stop. If you have a family with four kids on mountain bikes with a logging truck going down the road, then it’s an education thing.” Disputes occur not just in the forest but on the coast, too. Aquaculture is not compatible with tourism, according to coastal inn owners who regularly protest unsightly aquaculture elements at town council meetings that their guests would rather not see. Tourism and fisheries occasionally clash, too. The Coastal Waters Commission in Freeport in 2005 asked the town council to ban canoes and kayaks from the town dock, stating that the dock is too busy and too high off the water for the average canoeist or kayaker to operate safely; however, the ban was not approved. Mistrust has fueled limited stakeholder dialogue across industry lines, and open discussions must ensue. The Maine State Lobstermen’s Association and the Maine Windjammers Association, for example, should talk rather than ignore each other. “I’ve heard lobstermen say, ‘I hate windjammers,’” Files said, “and that we will ruin their traps.” Interactions, or a lack of, will affect Maine’s social and economic future.

In these multi-industry environments, recreationists often come away with a negative experience. Quiet recreationists – those who are non-motorized – feel only a multi-use landscape exists in this state. While floating in a non-motorized regulated lake, recreationists still hear timber cutting in the distance and, perhaps, see its evidence. This environment makes the experience feel like it’s multi-use to quiet recreationists attempting to find solitude. “It’s bad enough with unsustainable forestry going on everywhere,” Conover said. “We can hear harvesting going on whatever the token requirement is to be away from the water. At Moose River, you look up at clear-cuts, and you are in earshot of machinery.” Quiet recreationists do not feel recognized by the state or the other natural resource industries.

Tourism could be said to be treated unfairly, or like a step-child, by the other industries. Commercial tourism users, if viewed as incompatible, face hindered access to natural resources on public or private land. This is problematic because Maine entrepreneurs, such as guide operators, depend economically on access to quality lands but find themselves unwelcome. “Extreme protection of the land wouldn’t be a [healthy] business climate,” Libby said. The worry is that commercial enterprises could exceed capacity limits on fragile lands and reduce the quality of the experience. Baxter State Park has

looked at the impacts of commercial uses, whether moose tours, airplane excursions or for-profit camp visits. Commercial users, there, are asked to voluntarily fill out a survey so that use can be analyzed. Frustration occurs, stakeholders said, when parks, like Baxter, shut out guides. Entrepreneurs dislike questions regarding appropriateness or impact concerns of commercial users like canoe guides. “With the Allagash, what keeps coming up [at state meetings] are the commercial users and what problems they pose,” Gilpatrick said. “... For someone like me whose livelihood depended on it, I was not about to go up there and break a lot of laws.” Commercial users find an anti-access attitude unfair when non-commercial users, such as non-profit organizations, are treated as having no potential to do damage. As a solution, tourism businesses might be welcomed on lands if policies are in place to better protect the natural resources. A sporting camp owner suggested the state protect wildlife by creating trophy-only hunting areas, which would ensure the safety of smaller animals. “We need to prioritize fishing areas, hunting areas and a trophy area of where we can’t shoot animals,” Libby said, “unless they are so big like a 6-point or something.” Tourism businesses need support in order to be profitable individually and as part of the larger state industry.

The good news is that tourism’s compatibility with the other natural resources is a possibility, according to some natural resource professionals outside tourism. “I think you can have forest management, jobs and recreation,” said Sarah Medina, land use director for Seven Islands Land Company based in Bangor, “as long as everyone is able to consider each others’ uses and needs.” Seven Islands operates under a compatibility paradigm with three private campsite areas situated on its 180,000 acres, making it successful for both forestry and recreation. South Arm, a private company, manages Seven Islands’ three campsites, equipped with electricity, water and sewer, and its remote sites, too. South Arm leases the land, giving 10 percent of the camping fee to the landowner to offset costs. The South Arm staff assists tourists while protecting the land. “As a good example of how recreation can occur: With South Arm, there is someone in the recreational business in the campground area that can monitor campers, but we [as landowners] don’t have to manage them,” Medina said. “With the number of people recreating, public use has to be managed.” The goal is for tourism to be a leader in the cohesive managing of a community with diverse natural resource assets. In the process, economists foresee the timber industry becoming a smaller player in the future and the demand for nature-based tourism growing, partly due to economic factors beyond the state of Maine. Even with existing natural resource industry

declines, the intertwined landscape can remain strong. Agriculture, for example, plays an important part of the tourism equation. Agriculture is said to be more important for tourism, perhaps, than for food production because it keeps land open for tourists to see. The tourism industry seeks compatibility in order to better its business climate throughout the state.

Facing Tourism's Faults. Tourism receives criticism for many elements, including the disrespect of the working industries. Stakeholders, some in the tourism industry and some in related industries, indicate tourism only thinks of itself leading to negative impacts. Tourism squawks at any elements that take away the industry's shine. Tourism might be proud to tout the local village but scoffs at the idea of bringing lobster bait through a village in the middle of the day. "Tourism, in general, benefits from publicly owned resources like water but values quaint fishing villages. This is not publicly owned but privately owned," said Joel Swanton, International Paper's manager of forest ecology, forest resources for the Northeast region in Bucksport. Foresters feel put on the defensive for clearing land and for asking that aesthetic damage be understood as temporary. Timberland managers know that laypeople don't have the context to understand what they are looking at. In this case, beauty might not be in the eye of the beholder. A poorly done lot can appear to show beautiful aesthetics and a well-managed one might be seen as a horror. "There is an assumption," Swanton continued, "that if I don't like the look, then I, Joe Public, can criticize it." Tourism's negative environmental impact on the other natural resource industries is evident. "We are seeing damage to logging roads, challenges to forest policy, damage from ATVs, overhunting and overfishing and overuse of campgrounds," Swanton added. Cumulative use causes problems, landowners have said, because recreation users do not think of the broader context of their use.

Land managers, in general, have sought to limit trail or recreation elements believing they could lead to permanent fixtures. "Once you have a hiking trail, and it's on the map, it will be taken at some point by the people who use the trail as a taking or public purchase," Cowperthwaite said. Landowners feel accommodating the user could hurt them in the end. How can landowners have enough trust so that if they do something to accommodate a certain group of people that those people won't take the land through zoning, purchase or restrictions in 10 or 20 years?

Tourism is accused of being disconnected from the economic viability of the natural resources that support it. Those outside the industry criticize tourism for not giving money to build infrastructure

throughout the state. Landowners complain about being part of the tourism infrastructure with no incentives. These landowners believe tourism is and has been sold on the backs of private landowners for decades. International Paper, which spends \$12,000 a year to keep up campgrounds, said it wouldn't pursue adding to campsites until incentive are put on the table.

Individual tourists, unfortunately, cause conflicts that give tourism a bad name to the other industries. Landowners must deal with noisy ATVs, illegal camping and refuse, like refrigerators, dumped in the woods. "The North Maine Woods has a control system that people pass through on a limited number of roads. I don't have the answer for landowners who have so many roads going into their lands that you can't gate," Cowperthwaite said. "Even the most environmentally aware person can have a negative impact if in the wrong place at the wrong time." Misbehaving tourists sometimes cause the most problems interacting with other tourists. This is because one tourist type does not get along with another. Day-trippers, for instance, can conflict with seasonal residents. Monhegan Island, known to be a painter's paradise, attracts both types of tourists. These two types do not get along because the summer residents feel intruded upon by day-trippers. One is there to make art, primarily, and the other to view it. Monheganers recall how actor Zero Mostel, of "Fiddler on the Roof" fame, tired of day tourists while living on the island for a stint to paint. One day he tried to scare the interlopers away by standing on shore and yelling "Cholera!" and "Plague!"

THIS STUDY'S CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Note to Readers: Full names and titles of stakeholders are presented here for the readers' convenience. (See Appendix B for the full list of this study's stakeholders.)

Maine tourism after decades of fragmentation is looking for direction. Proper planning will provide that direction – specifically sustainable tourism planning that cares for the natural resources and culture while improving economic development. With many potential downfalls, tourism operates at a narrow day-to-day level rather than a healthier season-to-season or year-to-year approach. The Blaine House conference recommends a formal matrix combined with a sophisticated SWOT identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Maine stakeholders believe in the two recommendations, but current dialogue revolves around identifying problems rather than solutions. Ongoing analysis by

consultants, such as Fermata, and the University of Maine should move the state toward quality planning recommendations. Tourism's success depends on having clearly identified planners who partner and seek appropriate development. Tourism officials will not be expected to move the industry ahead without the finances to do so. Stakeholders, in this chapter, identified several problematic money woes: land managers have little money due to lacking fees; town budgets cannot fund tourist infrastructure; and small regional tourism funds lead to few improvements. Mainers believe tourism growth in other states occurs because those states spend more dollars to promote the industry, but this isn't true. Maine's 2004 budget at \$7.2 million compares to Nebraska's approximately \$3 million and Minnesota's \$8 million. Attention to Maine tourism is essential because the state depends on tourism as its No. 1 industry unlike other states. Minnesota, for instance, touts tourism simply as one of its top five industries. Because Maine relies on the tourism industry more fiercely, one could argue that the industry, with the help of the state, should invest in a clear plan that empowers its players. Key points regarding sustainable economic development planning can be taken from stakeholders. Implementing all or one of the five will assist Maine's tourism industry.

1. Create a Master Plan. Tourism has been described as the activity of importing visitors to the region and managing their visits in a way that enhances the economy and communities and the natural environment. The industry must decide what kind of tourism experience it seeks to deliver. Not all development can be identified as good development. Rural areas, eager for development, might approve actions that will take away from the community's identity. A Downeast stakeholder expressed his development frustration. "In Southern Maine, sprawl is a bad word, and in rural Maine it is economic development," said Jeff McEvoy, owner of Weatherby's inn in Grand Lake Stream. "People who live here will complain that we don't have all the opportunities that are in Portland, but we shouldn't have all those because we are in Washington County." A master plan – or matrix – can be a guide for communities seeking to strengthen their tourism position. Government should consider pooling agency resources to develop a plan that can be given to communities to bring them into the tourism fold. Tourism entities across the nation, such as the Tourism Center in Minneapolis, have produced manuals that help communities identify natural resource assets and potential gains. If Maine develops a similar product, it will be important that all tourism players use it. Tourism Center regional coordinators outreach to Minnesota communities

with the manual approved by their Office of Tourism. As a Maine plan is shaped, industry representatives must use honest promotion of a destination and avoid measuring success by numbers. A focus on operational details creates a purely numbers game, such as the number of management actions taken, visitors through a gate, permits issued or revenue collected. The bigger success results will be yielding satisfying experiences for visitors and residents and improved social, economic and environmental conditions for communities (Bruns, 1995).

2. Build Tourism Partnerships. The matrix recommendation essentially works to establish partnerships that can bring voices together with a shared vision and to strategize beyond specific tourism niches. Tourism leaders need to demonstrate the ability to speak supportively of one another. Non-tourism stakeholders, such as foresters, need to partner with the vision, too, in order to achieve success. Key will be to build cohesiveness among the five natural resource industries. The Maine Forest Service, for example, assisted Wabanaki Indians in the late '80s with counteracting a decline in brown ash needed to make baskets, said Theresa Hoffman, the executive director of the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance in Old Town. This effort among the industries doesn't happen frequently enough. Note that "partnerships" can be defined broadly and occur between all sorts of entities, directly or indirectly enhancing tourism. Land trusts make efforts to lessen fear among towns of conserved lands. Land trusts want buy-in from the local residents on conservation decisions. "Most conservation across the country is trying to be as conscious of the community as possible," said Jane Arbuckle, director of stewardship at the Maine Coast Heritage Trust in Brunswick. Some communities turn to land trusts to protect what they value. Frenchboro residents, for instance, asked the Maine Coast Heritage Trust to buy part of the island to prevent it from being sold to wealthy people who would cut off access.

3. Give Communities a Voice. Quiet communities often do not move ahead. They might be quiet because they do not know how to proceed or because no one has asked their opinion. A barrier to public participation is government's lack of confidence regarding the competence and decision-making abilities of lay people. Researchers have shown that individuals who lack knowledge of scientific issues can quickly learn about critical features and choose policy options similar to those chosen by scientists (Doble &

Richardson, 1992). Maine tourism officials should invite communities to articulate what makes them unique. Residents often have a difficult time seeing what would interest anyone in their landscape. Fear of the unknown keeps many decaying towns frozen in time. Community members cannot be expected to become overnight experts in all things tourism but may be taught how to develop a plan. Tourism can be part of a solution during a time of economic transition. Field visits on the part of the Office of Tourism and university extension agents could enhance relationship with community members and encourage towns to embrace rather than push away tourism. Extension, in particular, can provide guidelines and information for the industry by assembling data on a statewide basis. Stakeholders indicate towns resistant to tourism should mirror and model what other inland towns have done. "If Belgrade and Greenville report on what their successes have been, then maybe Patten and Millinocket people will say, 'Well, gee, maybe we should try that,'" said Irvin Caverly, director of Baxter State Park in Millinocket. The attitude of local residents toward tourism and tourists may need to change from indifference or intolerance to one welcoming visitors to share their environment as stewards. "As with welcoming house guests, the attitude should be 'Ours to Share'" (Pigram, 2000). Having said all this, one must respect townspeople who say they don't want to travel in tourism circles. Most tourism industry officials would say it's fine to shut down local tourism discussions as long as those discussions had taken place.

4. Create Quality-vs.-Quantity Standards. Maine might want increased tourism to produce the high-dollar revenues like those referenced by the World Travel and Tourism Council, but too much tourism detracts from the whole. The state's marketing plan has pushed the idea that the more tourists the better, but at some point, quantity vs. quality must be weighed. Concentrated recreational use has harmed the environment. "In Gulf Hagas, the ecology is directly impacted by people parking in one special spot on a very crowded weekend," said Gabriel Kissinger, the northern regional conservation director of the Appalachian Mountain Club in Augusta. "In the bottom part of the state, we haven't effectively managed the scale of visits, which negatively impacts people's enjoyment of a place." As a solution, the state and its conservation land managers must create and enforce limits. Wilderness areas, such as Baxter State Park and the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, need to limit daily attendance to maintain a level of solitude. Sufficient land managers must be hired to care for parcels receiving increased public use. Due to tight budgets that

cause conserved areas to lack staff, areas should not receive promotion, perhaps, through signage or the media until appropriate infrastructure and increased land management can protect the land. In fragile habitats, infrastructure can be designed in a limited way, including limited access points. A small boat launch, for example, might be the most appropriate even in a community that has the money to build a larger one. Finally, stewardship awareness needs to be increased by the state, entrepreneurs and visitors. Everyone has a role in keeping Maine pristine, and the actions of one group will have influence on others. Ethics messages could be included with visitor information and marketing. Welcoming signs could be placed at the Kittery tollbooths asking those entering to “Please Be Good Stewards of the Land” so expectations are set early on.

5. Plan for Diverse Recreation and Destinations. Tourists might visit a community, but if there are no things-to-do offerings, they are at a loss. Or, if only a backwoods experience is available, many tourists will not be attracted. A community needs to present an inviting aura on how to engage with the area’s landscape. Too few activities create tension for and by those visitors while in the community, and residents develop a get-them-out-of-my-backyard attitude. “It’s important to have activities that make people want to stay here a week at a time,” said Matt Polstein, owner of the New England Outdoor Center in Millinocket. “If staying in roadside Motel X and your morning activity is walking across the street to McDonald’s, this will not make you want to stay here a week. Waking up in a cabin makes you feel different and connected and want to stay.” Residents, in Millinocket for instance, are critical of the town for not trying to develop more options because on a rainy day there isn’t much to suggest to tourists other than traveling to Bangor 90 miles away. Rural areas need basic infrastructure, like trails, to attract tourists. Weatherby’s inn in Grand Lake Stream sends visitors requesting hiking options miles away. “We don’t have a hiking trail anywhere around here within an hour’s drive,” McEvoy said. “We don’t have any trails in the hills around here except ATV trails. In the summer, people ask the most, ‘Where can I take a hike?’ There aren’t many places.” In many Maine areas, there is an opportunity for a larger-scale view.

To move forward, these rural areas need to remove their uninviting images, like Canada has done through Nova Scotia and New Brunswick’s driving loops and Cape Breton’s world-renown music scene. Living on the Canadian border in Madawaska, one stakeholder has experienced her northern neighbor’s

transformation. “The East Coast of Canada has always been considered the have-not province,” said Sheila Jans, senior fellow at the Quebec Labrador Foundation of the Atlantic Center for the Environment at a field desk in Madawaksa. “When I traveled, we would just have to endure the New Brunswick drive from Montreal to Halifax, and now they have turned that bland perception around. The province started realizing, ‘We better take care of what it is that we have going for us. We can’t become something that we’re not like Quebec.’” To create diversity, the industry can package recreational experiences for tourists and adopt business-partnering strategies. Packaging, by definition, promotes diversity and a higher quality visitor experience by putting tourists in touch with multiple experts to teach them about the outdoors. Again, Mainers can look to Canada where the Day Adventure Program in New Brunswick allows visitors to choose from more than 70 pre-planned itineraries from rappelling to candle-making that happen every day throughout the province (<http://www.fabuloustravel.com/adventures/nbeco/nbeco.html>). Tourists make reservations at numerous hotels and visitor’s centers in the program, which is organized by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism in Fredericton. In Maine, build on farm heritage and support another at-risk industry by providing agricultural-focused driving loops. Tourists love to drive by farms, and marketing and media coverage can promote this pastoral beauty. The state’s road map publication – currently produced by the Maine Tourism Association – should add scenic drives. Maine regions that offer loop options can then protect areas by moving the loops around as maps are reprinted. Finally, providing plenty of key information centers throughout the landscape is a way to share details to spread tourists out. Although Northern Maine is desperate for centers, the power of L.L. Bean in southern Maine should not be underestimated.

This chapter on sustainable tourism economic development planning brings together the wider stakeholder members to jointly build and support the industry. By encouraging all players, including communities, to plan, thorny issues can be addressed instead of pushed under the carpet. Discussions will lessen the impact of carrying capacity, infrastructure design or multiple-use recreation conflicts while building relationships amongst stakeholders to find a unified vision. The next chapter weaves a common thread through that vision so that a single brand might be sought and promoted throughout tourism and the other four natural resource industries. A brand, for this reason, can function as a planning tool.

CHAPTER 7: BLAINE HOUSE PROPOSAL
CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE BRANDING CAMPAIGN

RESEARCH STUDY

A comprehensive branding campaign, if instituted, could become part of achieving a healthy Maine tourism industry. This is one of the tourism proposals from the Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-based Industries. The Nov. 17, 2003 conference produced proposals to strengthen tourism while benefiting the other natural resource sectors. Conference dialogue focused on four tourism proposals – branding, economic development planning, education and state roles – that came from the consensus of state-level groups: the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Office of Tourism and the Maine Tourism Commission’s Natural Resources Committee.

Specifically, the conference led to one branding recommendation sent to the governor:

1. Establish an interagency task force to assess a unified branding theme. An interagency task force chaired by the Office of Tourism should be created with Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Department of Conservation, Department of Marine Resources, Department of Transportation, Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, Maine Arts Commission and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to seek a unified tourism and recreation theme toward a marketing/branding campaign. If feasible, the Office of Tourism would oversee and implement the process to develop the brand.

To consider this recommendation, conference attendees indicated other factors should be noted:

- Office of Tourism efforts have established some branding messages – like “It Must Be Maine” – and any new effort might lose the existing investment.
- A brand must be flexible to represent all interests as well as regions and seasons.
- Coordination across agencies is crucial for any branding effort.
- Existing financial resources must be evaluated before moving ahead with a branding message.

The Blaine House conference stimulated dialogue across the five natural resource sectors regarding a comprehensive overarching brand all agencies can embrace. Some participants felt the state is too diverse for a single brand. Despite this concern, the unified branding proposal has stayed on the Office

of Tourism agenda, as evidenced by the summary recommendations released after the conference. “While there is a general consensus that a branding message that has clear meaning in the marketplace would be of immense value, the actual attainment of ‘one’ such message proved to be more complicated and complex than time allowed. However the breakout groups did on the whole agree that the door for discussion should stay open and that a possible solution might be arrived at,” the summary stated of the approximately 100 participants at this session. This chapter analyzes the Blaine House conference branding recommendation and related observations through diverse tourism stakeholders interviewed independently for this study. Only 15 of the 43 interviewees in this study made branding-related comments, demonstrating most are unknowledgeable about the topic rather than for or against it.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer demand exists worldwide for sustainable tourism operations. “Green sells. Moving away from mass tourism, postmodern travelers want to believe that their use of tourism facilities and their presence in tourist destinations will not damage the resources they visit and will embrace the promises offered by tourism companies,” wrote Xavier Font of the Centre for the Study of Small Tourism and Hospitality Firms at Leeds Metropolitan University (Font & Buckley, 2001). The world tourism market incorporated 760 million international tourism trips in 2004 (WTO, 2005). Although it is not possible to know how many visits fall under the green or sustainable tourism category, revenues from outdoor recreation trips in Maine has grown – showing close to a 40-percent increase from 2001 to 2003 (Longwoods, 2004). Market potential has led rural destinations, such as Maine, to pursue branding themselves as sustainable to attract attention. “These towns and villages are vulnerable to large scale, exogenous policy changes, have typically lower than average incomes and yet are located adjacent to, or sometimes, directly within attractive wild landscapes,” wrote the University of Montana’s Stephen F. McCool in his “Devils, Details and Dilemmas in the Search for Sustainable Tourism” paper presented in a University of Maine-Orono guest lecture emphasizing planning approaches (McCool, 2004). Increasing branding will bring tourism possibilities to depressed areas located in rich environmental settings.

Certification or labeling, discussed in the most current academic literature, can promote a sustainable nature message. Leeds Metropolitan University compiled a large directory of ecolabels around

the world. As a caution, branding and certification can be thought of as separate or synonymous. Some in the industry will think of the terms as the same while others will define them as separate marketing-type tools. What is known is that both place a “stamp” onto some facet of the tourism industry in hopes of making it more attractive to potential visitors. Branding, by itself, requires no standards, but certification must typically meet some standards and could be used as part of a branding strategy. Academics applaud Australia’s Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Programme and Europe’s multiple labels but note North America’s general reluctance to introduce ecolabels. “[Through branding labels] the market mechanism can be routed towards environmental protection, preservation and even towards the upgrading of already degraded environments through various kinds of environmental labeling” (Font & Buckley, 2001).

BACKGROUND

The state’s current branding strategy should be evaluated. State agencies have used a wide view to marry the state identity with the natural resources. “The actual environment is tourism and vice versa,” Bowditch said. “In terms of branding, I prefer to look at it as nature tourism in broad terms. There is a lot more to Maine than a bird-watching trip in the Cutler region or a moose safari in the Moosehead region.” A clear nature image has resulted without detailed state branding efforts, yet stakeholders acknowledge what the state has done. The current Office of Tourism slogan – “It Must Be Maine” – promotes diverse outdoor scenes from beaches to puffins. Annual governor’s conferences have tried to build on the nature-based theme. “When I first moved here, I went to a governor’s conference ... that focused on nature and a grasp on the last of tracks of land that are wild,” said Sheila Jans, a senior fellow with the Quebec Labrador Foundation of the Atlantic Center for the Environment at a field desk in Madawaska. The Office of Tourism, stakeholders said, has a larger mythical advantage on how Maine is perceived. Plus, entrepreneurs believe in the importance to deliver on the environment. “The link between tourism and natural resources is vital because that’s what we are,” said Sally M. Littlefield, co-owner of the Oakland House Seaside Resort in Brooksville on Penobscot Bay. “What we sell is our natural environment – the smell of sea, salty air and pine, much as it might have been 100 years ago.” Nature is what Maine is all about even in non-nature settings, like the bricks-and-mortar massive L.L. Bean store open 24 hours a day in Freeport. “What [shoppers] are buying at L.L. Bean is the image,” said Thomas Urquhart, with Urquhart & Spritz consulting

firm in Portland and a former Maine Audubon director. “Freeport is not a place you’ll find nature except at the L.L. Bean fish tank.” Outside on the trail or inside retail shops, Maine has a nature image.

Although it’s natural to think of Maine’s tourism image as attractive, it’s not natural for the brand to stay this way. A few stakeholders are concerned about maintaining the state’s historic wilderness image, evidenced, in part, by the public’s rejection of a casino in 2004 believed to detract from the current image. “If there is a casino,” Urquhart said, “that [nature] image will be tarnished and people will no longer think Maine ...water ... rocks.” But, is Maine’s wilderness image a reality? Some environmentalists worry the state’s wild image – if not the real thing – could disappear. One stakeholder has seen outfitters take clients to Minnesota, Canada and even Russia over Maine to find undisturbed landscapes. “Maine’s wilderness image has not deteriorated yet,” said Garrett Conover, owner of North Woods Ways guiding business in Willimantic. “It has been expressed as disappointment, but there are not hordes of people avoiding Maine.” The image, however, can change at any moment.

Branding’s pros, cons and benefits can be spelled out. Pros include providing accurate expectations to potential visitors; helping the small entrepreneur gain visibility; sending a welcoming message to visitors while identifying behavior expectations; using an intertwined image of the natural and cultural resources; layering regional sub-brands within the state; and encouraging entrepreneurs to receive stewardship training. Cons include limiting a diverse message; causing carrying capacity issues in remote places; poor monitoring of sustainability standards and results; and increasing short-term profits instead of long-term resource health. Put bluntly: If you want to be branded, it’s different than someone branding you. Scholarly references, as listed in the previous section, indicate sustainable tourism brands attract a higher-income visitor. Not everyone believes in the reality of increased visits by higher-income tourists. “The high-quality experience might bring some [wealthy] people in, but will they spend those humongous dollar amounts? Probably not,” said Kevin Boyle, University of Maine professor of Resource Economics and Policy. Maine might only gain a lot of environmental-oriented college students who just scrape by.

Taking both the pros and cons into consideration, a branding strategy could accomplish several things: promoting quality experiences for both mainstream and niche recreationists; providing business incentives to be recognized formally or informally as sustainable; and supporting development that promotes quality natural resources. Benefiting from branding will be Maine’s small tourism businesses,

which gain visibility they might not otherwise. The branding message could get the word out about businesses struggling to make it in a far off corner of the state. Two interviewed entrepreneurs – Jeff McEvoy of Weatherby’s in Grand Lake Stream and Matt Libby of Libby Sporting Camps out of Ashland – have sought expensive paid corporate sponsorships from Orvis as a marketing ploy. These small businesses have challenges, such as diversifying to gain a bigger market share. Weatherby’s, known for pristine fly-fishing options, tried to diversify by scheduling a summer nature photography course, but, in the end, it was canceled. “I had not one call on it,” said McEvoy, the inn’s owner. “L.L. Bean has [photography classes], and they have people pounding down the door on it, so it’s all in the marketing.” Without solid big-picture branding from the state, these businesses will struggle for visibility and profits.

ANALYSIS OF THE BLAINE HOUSE RECOMMENDATION

1. Establish an Interagency Task Force to Assess a Unified Branding Theme. *This Blaine House recommendation asks that an interagency task force chaired by the Office of Tourism be created with Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Department of Conservation, Department of Marine Resources, Department of Transportation, Department of Agriculture, the Maine Arts Commission and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to seek a unified tourism and recreation theme toward a marketing/branding campaign. If feasible, the Office of Tourism would oversee and implement the process to develop the brand.*

An interagency government task force, the conference suggested, should be created to identify a message fitting all agencies and stakeholders. This level of inclusive visioning, however, is still in an infancy stage in Maine. Again, only 15 of the 43 interviewees made branding-related comments, demonstrating that stakeholders might not be for or against branding as much as unknowledgeable about its use and potential. Interviewees voiced the many inequalities – from conflicting recreations to carrying capacity issues – that need to be addressed before establishing a clear brand.

One thing to consider is the demand for regional brands within the statewide brand. Up to this point, regional differences have been pushed aside or have challenged a unified branding concept, as some areas are less visible on the figurative and literal tourism maps. With eight official Office of Tourism

distinct tourism regions mapped out, adding more regions could benefit the industry financially and culturally. Regional money – approximately \$80,000 annually to each region – often never filters down to the smaller communities, especially in the larger regions, to fit into that region’s brand or develop a related brand. This sub-region identification, stakeholders said, should be a focus even though a legislative attempt a few years ago to make the St. John Valley of Aroostook County its own region did not pass. “I think it’s ridiculous thinking that Aroostook County [as one large region] can just divide itself,” said Jans, wanting something more formal. “It can’t because it’s just too huge.” Each region appears to want to develop and promote its own brand, indicating one brand might not fit all.

A lack of attention to Maine’s cultural diversity keeps residents apart rather than pulling them together under a single brand. Embracing cultural tourism could unite the two Maines – north and south. “The [tourism] office’s staff gives lip-service to certain aspects of cultural development,” Jans said. “... It will be through culture to unify us.” In her northern tier, Jans said physical landscape corridors, such as the St. John Valley, and rivers, such as the St. Croix, can link communities, thereby creating cultural coalitions. Projects involving the St. Croix River, which serves as an international boundary, tie U.S. communities with Canadian communities on the other side of the water. A layered message could include Maine’s modern-day people. Only through more analytical thinking will Maine be a destination match to Montreal and other urban areas. “Why do people want to go to Montreal?” Jans asked. “Well, because it’s much more vibrant. Maine has to create an image that is more sophisticated and complex and that we don’t all sit around in flannel shirts and hunt.” Maine’s regions and residents must become part of the quality aspect of the brand.

Connecting “Quality” to Maine’s Brand. Stakeholders, overall, claim the word Maine evokes an image of quality. The connection of quality to Maine’s brand was documented in the pre-conference Blaine House tourism report that said, “Maine, in itself, is a brand. Perhaps the single most important image that the brand ‘Maine’ elicits among those who recognize it is that of quality. This aspect has been capitalized on by such diverse businesses as Tom’s of Maine, L.L. Bean, Poland Spring and the Maine Office of Tourism.” By synthesizing interviewees’ comments, the “quality” component appears to fit all the natural resource sectors instead of each having its own slogan, such as tourism’s It Must Be Maine and agriculture’s Get Real, Get Maine. “Commodities in Maine have identified a standard of quality that speaks

to brand notification,” said Julie-Marie Bickford of the Maine Dairy Industry Association in Augusta. “When marketing Maine, tie into this ‘quality’ aspect.” Quality appears to be a universal goal.

A nature-based slogan could reflect year-round quality experiences in the quality outdoors. The quality element of Maine’s brand could be noted in promotions done any time of the year. “We need to create interest in the shoulder season. If we have a quality experience, then keep marketing it,” said Matt Polstein, owner of the New England Outdoor Center in Millinocket. Marketing content could then enhance Maine’s mainstream tourism but, more importantly, the outdoor niche as well. Entrepreneurs can look for the nature-based market year-round but especially in the shoulder seasons when market growth is needed. Investing in spring and fall marketing, at either a state or entrepreneurial level, should be encouraged even if the return will be smaller.

Assessing Branding’s Accuracy. Marketing must present an accurate picture, avoiding unrealistic resource promises like guaranteed wildlife sightings. Tourists learn the hard way, often, that they will not see moose in many Downeast areas, including Acadia National Park, because the human population density and habitat do not support the large mammals. “Tourism needs to get away from promoting that myth of wilderness,” said Sarah Medina, land-use director at Seven Islands Land Co. in Bangor. “We had one sporting camp owner who decided to stop promoting wilderness and the idea that you can shoot a huge moose but rather start promoting the quality of the experience, and that if you are lucky, you might get a big one.” Tourism must provide accurate expectations to steer visitors clear of less appropriate environments for their individual needs. The Sunday River Inn staff in Newry talks to potential guests and listens to their concerns. “We start to work with our guests before they get here because we want to create this expectation,” said Steve Wight, owner of Sunday River Inn. “We need to make sure that people know what they will expect when they get here and also know that this might not be the right place for them. We do this through the phone, Internet and e-mail before they get here, and we deliver on that when they are here with as much personal interaction with them.” If marketing highlights quality natural resources, an accurate image of what those resources possess or need to be protected will occur.

The industry needs to send out an accurate message before, during and after a visit. Visitors should learn of quality experiences in the quality outdoors before beginning their trip. Sharing the message with visitors early on, perhaps, can lead to a stewardship mindset while they are in the state. “By the time

they cross the border, it's a little late to say that, 'We know you want to do four-wheeling, but there are places to do this and places not to do it,'" Wight added. "We need to give this message earlier and make it one that is very welcoming: 'We know you want to come and share our resources and do it in a way that will be just as exciting for the next person.'" When given the opportunity, entrepreneurs or the state should build upon this idea by sending out promotional materials that highlight a welcoming stewardship message.

Maine stakeholders indicated stewardship is a critical component to any type of branding. A formal branding program in Maine, therefore, should include stewardship training, just like a guide's license incorporates this component. Minimum impact practices can be emphasized with a Leave-No-Trace training opportunity for an operator or the public. One of Maine's best stewardship-oriented models involves the Maine Sea Kayak Guides and Instructors (MASKGI) association. Members are asked to take on the stewardship brand by signing a pledge to the organization documenting they will follow MASKGI principles and relate those ethics to all of their clients.

RELATED TO THE RECOMMENDATION

Challenges exist to pinpoint a united branding message. The 43 interviewees allude to differences amongst the brand they would give Maine. Topics related to the branding recommendation include Questioning the Fear of Publicity, Analyzing Conflicting Resource Uses and Adding a Certification Program.

Questioning the Fear of Publicity. Branding can cause carrying capacity issues in Maine's rural landscape because attention will be drawn to secluded, and fragile, areas. A few stakeholders steadfastly voice concerns about concentrated natural resource use leading to ecological or social damage to the state's wild image. Some want Maine to remain remote and others to be open with well-marked and easily accessible destinations. The desire to continue to recreate on a primitive landscape stems, in part, from a Maine tradition to be closed to federal land additions. "I met a mill worker from Millinocket who said, 'I don't want a national park because the whole point of Maine is that I want to take my compass and walk in to find that lake,'" said Urquhart, who said he, personally, would be for additional national park land in Maine. A few tourism stakeholders interpret appropriate marketing as reduced marketing, believing

promotion of a specific location lessens its quality. Maine has had a “remote pond” designation, for instance, that some feel has increased visitation and worked against protection. More than 170 ponds (out of 3,300) in Maine’s unorganized territories qualify as “remote ponds” with limited road access as designated by the Land Use Regulation Commission with assistance from IF&W. “The ‘remote ponds’ designation protected a particular pond from any new roads with a hike-in-only situation,” Libby said. “In theory you think that you’d have less traffic, but it is amazing how many people are there. To get to the remote pond, you drove by a half dozen lakes that had no one in them, and then you hike in and find all these people at these remote ponds.” Unfortunately, the fear of publicity does not support the wider branding effort but rather contradicts it. “Some people in IF&W had a fit when I talked of marketing [more] resources,” said Bucky Owen, former commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W). “We’ve marketed bear and moose – the relatively rare resources that Maine has.” This remark reflects frustration of the anti-promotion climate.

Analyzing Conflicting Resource Uses. Branding can lead to a multi-use environment that some stakeholders find destructive to Maine’s natural resource health because a landscape that allows more than one industry or recreation to access the same parcel can bring conflict. A Penobscot Bay inn owner believes the tourism industry can be negatively affected when other natural resource industries begin to operate in the area. Marine industry attempts for salmon finfish farming, Littlefield said, would be unsightly in the pristine bay. To gain scientific knowledge, the Oakland House Seaside Resort owners took it upon themselves to visit U.S. finfish aquaculture communities along the East Coast and to study other aquaculture areas around the world. Devastating finfish aquaculture has affected the coast of Europe and Canada. “Never do you see in advertising for tourism in Norway, Scotland and British Columbia romantic scenes of salmon farms,” said Littlefield, noting, too, that Alaska and California have banned finfish aquaculture. Littlefield is a member of the East Penobscot Bay Environmental Alliance that formed four years ago with approximately 400 members to fight an application for finfish farming off three islands in the bay. Through one unified voice, the group funded scientific research on the bay’s water flushing abilities that eventually led to the withdrawal of the company’s finfish application to operate there. The

alliance still exists today to keep the area's environmental tourism brand strong because residents feel tourism is how the community has made and continues to make its living.

Adding a Certification Program. One of the most proven methods, in the academic literature, to promote an area is through an ecolabel program that builds consumer-driven returns with enhanced environmental practices. If a certification strategy is developed, the state could provide "green plaques" to sustainable tourism business. "As for a certification system, if you get the 'green plaque,' then you are recognized for being a green provider," said Natalie Springuel, marine extension associate for Maine Sea Grant in Bar Harbor. "'I Meet Maine State Standards for Sustainable Tourism' could be a great marketing tool and recognize the work already being done here and hope that more businesses would operate with sustainable practices." Ecolabels standardize the promotion of environmental claims by following set criteria, usually based on an impartial third party for verification (Font & Buckeley, 2001). The first step to creating an ecolabel is to consider the stakeholders to be included and then to develop the criteria, methods of verification and, finally, the long-term management of the ecolabel. Through ecolabels, best practices can be created (Vail, 2004).

A Swedish ecolabeling program called "Nature's Best," started in 2002, offers voluntary accreditation through a bottom-up organization in which government acts as a facilitator but not the director. Overseen by three entities – Sweden's Travel and Tourism Council, Society for Nature Conservation and the Swedish Ecotourism Association – the program provides profitable niche market opportunities, rural economic development and community vitality options with the sustainable use of natural attractions. As part of Europe's first ecotourism label, Nature's Best has certified 55 operators and 150 products that receive industry respect and increased business by discriminating tourists. Perhaps the Swedish label will draw tourism interests to the whole country, but pressure exists on product quality, according to David Vail, professor of economics at Bowdoin College in Brunswick. "To be economically successful, an ecotourism brand must guarantee discriminating clients a quality tourism experience exceeding market norms" (Vail, 2004). Ecolabels must monitor their participants, typically through site visits by certified personnel. Although businesses naturally fear assessment, the process offers applicants a series of opportunities for feedback on their business management plans. For this reason, even unsuccessful

applicants can improve their bottom line. It appears certification will become a part of the Maine landscape, even if just on a regional basis. The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, made up of three states and two Canadian provinces, has a five-year plan to create a geotourism strategy, including possible certification. Emphasis will be on multiple levels of accreditation, making it easy to get started and focusing on business training (Vail, 2004).

Few of this study's Maine interviewees knew of certification to suggest it as a logical branding option, but ecolabels should not be seen as a threat. Other natural resource industries, like forestry, have devised their own labels. The development of ecolabels recognizes industries' need to clean up their act and introduce methods to do so, both in the tourism industry as well as other sectors like manufacturing and forestry (Font & Buckley, 2001). Participants, however, fear who will oversee the program, set the standards, determine fees and monitor results. These concerns become prominent especially if the government operates the program. Stringent ecolabel assessment must be designed into the certification strategy. Common ecolabel pitfalls include relaxed standards for the benefit of the profit-seeking private sector and creation of an ecolabel for short-term gain without the long-term environmental commitment (Wheeler, 1998). These dangers must be headed off during the planning stage. Green tourism marketing can be regulated by a variety of means from legislation to industry self-regulation to voluntary codes of practice. Green claims work best in countries where the environment is considered of importance and where monitoring systems enforce good practices. If Maine creates a statewide ecolabel, it must be able to ensure the validity of the individual claim so that the public will have confidence in its authority.

THIS STUDY'S CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Note to Readers: Full names and titles of interviewed stakeholders are listed below for the reader's convenience. (See Appendix B for the full list of this study's 43 interviewed stakeholders.)

Ecological protections are needed behind the current Office of Tourism slogan – “It Must Be Maine” – used to advertise the state. A more formal sustainable tourism brand could serve as a comprehensive planning tool to promote sound industry principles, such as appropriate development at a state and local level. The brand can be informally stated through marketing and promotional materials or formally outlined through a certification program. Some tourism leaders feel only projects that incorporate

a stewardship element should be backed by the state, whether through funding, marketing or networking. Maine should look to other states, such as Pennsylvania, to see how they have branded their entire state or a region of the state. The Pennsylvania Wilds program, crafted by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, gains visibility for the north central part of the state, including more than 1.6 million acres of state forest and game lands and 27 state parks. “Pennsylvania Wilds” marketing and signage promote the region while sending stewardship messages. A government task force has brought together all the resource agencies with initiatives to support local planning, encourage the private sector and invest in facilities. Ecological policies have been initiated, such as putting a moratorium on ATV trails in the state forest area (<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/info/pawilds/about.aspx>). Below are three goals that should be kept in mind as progress is made toward developing a comprehensive branding stamp that fits Maine’s tourist landscape.

1. Let “Quality” Speak to Brand Identification. With a rich resource history, Maine is both natural and cultural, but the larger idea of sustainable tourism fits well, especially when given a slight twist. If “quality” identifies the Maine brand, there is room within that for both natural and the cultural components. The idea of quality natural resources can be a way to distinguish Maine from other U.S. states and can provide resident satisfaction and economic returns. Other locations branding themselves as nature-based tourism destinations have seen this type of boost. Ely, Minn., made up of 3,700 residents on the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, had relied on mining opportunities until that industry shrunk and the town decided to change its brand, making the pristine wilderness the theme of its tourism landscape (<http://www.bwcaw.org>). Ely’s International Wolf Center added a destination focus while reinforcing the overall nature and strong ecological messages. “It’s the concept of wilderness,” said Jym St. Pierre, Maine director of RESTORE: The North Woods, “that they have been able to tap into the tourism point of view.” Townspeople value their high-quality natural resources both culturally and politically, and the landscape has paid them back in return.

2. Consider the Value of Certification. A “green” Maine tourism certification program could result in marketing the state’s many eco-friendly businesses. Nova Scotia, for instance, has numerous

certifications that its tourism body believes draw tourists. In Maine, the Colony Inn in Kennebunkport is a master of posting affiliations to brand and to sell itself. It proudly displays membership to the following organizations in its entrance: Green Hotels Association, Maine Businesses for Social Responsibility, National Wildlife Federation, The Kennebunk Land Trust, The Kennebunkport Conservation Trust, The Animal Welfare Society and National Trust for Historic Preservation Historic Hotels of America. It prints the slogan – “Maine’s First Environmentally Responsible Hotel” – on its brochures, as a statewide Maine brand could do to attract the growing outdoor market. Maine’s nature-based businesses struggle to get the word out about their businesses, whether a birding b&b or an agritourism dairy farm. The green component of these businesses could be made bright green with assistance of the industry and, possibly, the state. A flat green hue can be polished to a stronger intensity if sustainable tourism principles, such as buying local products and hiring local people, are followed.

3. Proceed Deliberately with Research. Concerns in Maine over choosing one brand to fit all the state’s agencies, although valid, might need to be pushed aside now to more fully investigate the possibility of branding in order to know if it is not a good idea. Maine has a definite image beyond its borders right now. We, as residents, are often more impressed with Maine’s image when we assess reactions from others when telling them where we are from. The word Maine is a magnet, and the magnetic images – some which attract and some which repel – need to be assessed before the industry proceeds with branding. Further research, in and outside the state, should be done, and the state’s image should not be monkeyed with until it is studied more (Edwards, 2002). It appears that Maine wants to move ahead carefully, evidenced by a meeting by Governor’s Steering Committee on Natural Resource-based Industries this past summer to specifically study marketing efforts and how those efforts are being done independently right now by sector. In the day-long forum’s meeting summary, attendees asked: “Is there synergy to be gained from marketing a broad portfolio of Maine products and services under a single Maine image or brand?”

This chapter on branding serves as the icing on the cake, meaning that a brand should be spread last over the entire body of the industry. First the industry needs to identify and incorporate all the

necessary ingredients and only then should it pinpoint and act upon a brand to fit the whole. The next chapter examines branding and the other three Blaine House conference proposals together to make the overall study conclusions. By seeing the key points of the entire study in one place, a reader can understand how the findings overlap; therefore, one action can produce, possibly, beneficial outcomes or alleviate tensions throughout multiple facets of the industry.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

This sustainable tourism research of the state's stakeholders has evolved into a semi-case study of the Maine tourism industry – the who, what, when, where, why and how. These factors have not been documented in one place until now. This final chapter is structured to reflect the four Blaine House conference proposals: educational efforts; state government roles and responsibilities; economic development planning; and branding strategies. Each proposal is included below with a summary of this study's findings and specific actions that go beyond the 2003 conference recommendations. As one reads the findings, notice several cross-over points that are expressed, directly and indirectly, throughout the proposals. Stakeholder input, for example, should be encouraged by the industry and the state on everything from niche recreation enhancements to land access solutions. Ideas should be acted on that reflect sustainability principles. Communities should be given a voice on whether to include tourism, how to do so and what elements reflect their authentic selves. Tourism products should be measured by the quality of the experience rather than by the quantity of people visiting, especially in rural areas where new signage or attractions need time to draw interest to the area. The creation of an interagency state tourism body could address a variety of needs from curbing agency conflicts to providing more holistic interpretation at state visitor centers.

MAKE HIGHER EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND EXTENSION PRIORITIES

Summary: Education happens in front of a blackboard but out in the field, too. Those to be educated include all levels – students, entrepreneurs, associations and communities. Within education, guiding sustainability principles can be promoted. Real estate agents can alert potential homeowners of local land access traditions. Inns can function, especially, as stewardship interpreters to visitors seeking suggestions on things to do. Once the principles are set, visitor behavior can be managed to cause less impact on the environment and on communities.

* **Enhance Tourism Education.** Since the governor's 2004 State of the State address, the University of Maine System has been charged to take on a role in tourism research. The new Center for Tourism Research and Outreach (CenTRO) should focus on extension to reach the industry's entrepreneurs

and communities. The University of Minnesota's Tourism Center can serve as a model. Extension can assess and overcome tourism's stereotypes, such as jobs that pay little. The University of Maine-Orono's Department of Forest Management could add a third Parks, Recreation and Tourism position that serves outdoor recreation extension in order to build on a review by the Society of American Foresters and the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES). Traditional formal curriculum should encourage career options. The Parks, Recreation and Tourism program should continue to teach sustainable tourism and expand its tourism offerings. Finally, research can assist the Office of Tourism in documenting best practices in the state and beyond Maine's border. Some exemplary Maine certification examples include the Maine Island Trails Association (MITA) partnerships and the Maine Association of Sea Kayak Guides and Instructors (MASKGI), which has a professional code of ethics (www.maineaseakayakguides.com/ethics.html).

* **Give Students School Credit.** Students of all levels, grade school through college, could earn school credit for natural resource care in their own community or state. Maintaining trails, for instance, could be of benefit to the student, the resource and the community. As a reward, the governor could send a personal letter and a future certificate for credit to a Maine state college.

* **Educate Students on Polar Attitudes.** Before nature-based tourism students walk out of the classroom, they need to be exposed to the real-world polar views that the public holds on complex resource management issues and be taught how to facilitate dialogue to foster participatory democracy. Teachers should not assume students enter college with the skill to unravel difficult resource discussions, and those professors should not take authoritarian positions that leave little room for discussion because students will mirror this attitude in their interactions with the public on natural resource issues.

* **Teach Communities and Citizens Their Potential.** The industry should reach out to communities wanting to learn more about tourism. This includes struggling communities, having prospered at one time through forestry, farming or fisheries, now looking to diversify. Education can manage expected industry tensions. Field trips by state officials and industry leaders are a first step to show support. As the process unfolds, citizens should be empowered to make tourism and natural resource decisions. Then, as members of a community, citizens must see and promote their area's potential instead of viewing their locale as having nothing to see or do.

CLARIFY STATE AGENCY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Summary: Public agency roles and responsibilities are potentially vast regarding the tourism industry. First, the state's golden landscape needs to be protected by passing environment-sustaining policies. The Australian government has incorporated ecological integrity initiatives in its federal and state legislation. Maine government can both formally and informally influence the direction of the industry. It must dialogue with all stakeholders, who need a listening ear, to let them know of its support and bring the five natural resource sectors – forestry, agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and tourism – together so daily operations can be as compatible as possible.

*** Increase Tourism Funding to the State and Its Entrepreneurs.** Tourism-related tax revenues should benefit the industry, so it can reap its own rewards rather than have those revenues go to the state's General Fund. Ninety-five percent of the meals and lodging tax, begun in 2004 in part to assist the tourism industry, goes to the General Fund, adding a minimal \$300,000 approximately to the annual Office of Tourism budget. A better approach is the state's snowmobile strategy, allowing Inland Fisheries & Wildlife-gathered tax revenues to stay fully in the sector through Department of Conservation grants to the 312 state-registered clubs to build trails. State park admission fees, surprisingly, go to the General Fund instead of back to the state parks. Even if all state park fees were returned to the Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL), however, most would say these funds alone would not sustain an underfunded BPL unless drastic fee structure changes took place. State funds should be given, too, to outside organizations, such as the Maine Youth Corps, and landowners for their efforts with constructing and maintaining public trails and infrastructure. The state should provide financial tourism incentives, such as grants and loans, to the small business owner while reducing everyday entrepreneurial costs caused by zoning regulations, few skilled workers and little natural resources protection. Finally, the Office of Tourism, which recognizes eight tourism regions, should be challenged to add sub-regions so that smaller communities could be recognized within the designated larger region. Distribution of the office's marketing money within a region appears unfair when some communities longing for tourism dollars receive nothing. Bar Harbor, which is in Hancock County, garners most of the marketing dollars for its large region that covers Hancock and Washington counties.

*** Expand the Office of Tourism Role.** The Office of Tourism mandate needs to expand beyond marketing to include infrastructure, interpretation, environmental protection, community economic development and comprehensive planning. The Office of Tourism is said to concern itself with sustaining numbers, which is standard, instead of focusing on the quality of the experiences. While marketing should remain a central role for the office, its marketing messages should shift from a series of pretty pictures to images emphasizing stewardship and include in-state as well as out-of-state campaigns. Currently, the office is restricted to marketing out of state even though industry statistics show the importance of Mainers recreating in their own state. Through expanded duties, the office can serve the entrepreneur, the tourists, the communities and the industry.

*** Create an Interagency Tourism Board.** A new political body, made up of representatives from all state agencies, could curb conflicting agency policies, combine funding and look beyond the day-to-day marketing responsibilities to broader goals such as measuring tourist satisfaction through new survey methods. Tourism-related initiatives from access to infrastructure to management could be enacted in a more efficient manner due to support from the combined agency representatives. Efforts can go toward monitoring and working with businesses and landowners to ensure quality visitor experiences. Currently, without one place for the five natural resource industries to come together to discuss issues, each has operated in a vacuum leading to stagnant results. Maine could look to Montana to mirror its interagency tourism board. This state, in anticipation of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial, created the multi-agency Montana Tourism and Recreation Initiative (MTRI) to plan and fund mutually beneficial tourism and recreation projects that serve residents and visitors. “A common goal is to facilitate excellence in tourism and recreation experiences while protecting and conserving the social, cultural and natural resource values of Montanans” (Montana Tourism Industry, 2004). MTRI members include the state departments of commerce; transportation; fish, wildlife and parks; and natural resources and conservation. It also includes the governor’s office, Montana Heritage Preservation and Development Commission, Montana Historical Society, Montana State University Extension Service, Montana Arts Council, Tourism Advisory Council and federal bureaus like the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. Equivalent entities in Maine should join together, including outstanding regional groups like the inland-focused Maine Mountain Heritage Network and the coastal-focused Vacationland Resources Committee of the Down East Resource Conservation and Development Council.

*** Reorganize Tourism's Statewide Structure:** The legislature, as the head of state government, should make tourism a priority. It does not have a tourism committee, as most proposed bills are heard as an add-on to the business development committee. If a legislative tourism committee is not created, the state will continue to lose its ability to compete with the other New England states. The state should do more, too, to involve tourism professionals through paid opportunities to communicate with each other and government on a regular basis. Tourism businesspeople explained their voices currently go unheard because they cannot afford, literally, to be away from their businesses to meet with each other and/or to testify at lengthy legislative hearings. The 24-member Maine Tourism Commission (MTC), which assists the Office of Tourism with marketing and natural resource issues, is restricted by a lack of funding to its participants. These tourism leaders are expected to give of their own time to study the industry. "They are a 'volunteer' committee, and they are not paid," said Nat Bowditch, assistant director of the Maine Office of Tourism in Augusta. "So, what is the capacity to be out there in a big way? It is somewhat limited." If the state is serious about tourism, tourism's primary think-tank, the MTC, should not be treated as a volunteer effort. Beyond Augusta's efforts, additional Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) are needed to add to the Portland and Bangor locations. Without CVBs focusing exclusively on tourism, chambers of commerce must oversee the industry. Chambers do a lot for tourism, but they oversee all types of business and community needs, therefore, becoming spread very thinly.

*** Build Tourism Information Centers.** Tourism relies on centers as contact points with visitors to relay important things-to-do information. Video cameras could be installed at centers to display live images of puffins on Eastern Egg Island or a windjammer setting sail in Camden or views from atop Mount Katahdin in Baxter State Park. Interpretation at visitor centers can include interagency information, such as Inland Fisheries & Wildlife fishing licenses, Department of Conservation state park maps and Office of Tourism lodging lists. The responsibility for quality information centers, according to stakeholders, extends beyond any one government entity. The maintenance of these centers and roadway stops should be improved. Tourists, especially in inland Maine, encounter infrequently used rest areas, some without basic facilities like toilets. Working rest stops are needed to serve tourists' basic needs. Maine drivers stop at Irving gas stations, which advertise clean bathrooms, to use the facilities due to a lack of public restrooms in some areas. Maine, perhaps, should shut down operation of little-used rest areas and put money into

larger visitor centers – in Millinocket, Bethel, Grand Lake Stream, Greenville and Patten – with Department of Transportation funding.

*** Increase Amount of Accessible Land.** Government must analyze land access to ensure tourists have quality places to recreate. Overall, while retaining access to private land, the state should increase its public land acreage. *Private Land:* Although most Maine landowners abide by the tradition of public access to private lands, more “No Trespass” signs are going up. To assist, the state needs to continue to dialogue with landowners, such as through its Task Force on Traditional Uses and Public Access to Land in Maine (<http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/index.php?topic=Gov+News&id=3398&v=Article>). The 21-member group, which began in 2004 and includes small and large landowners, is analyzing the best ways to access land for traditional uses in the face of changes in land ownership patterns in the past decade. Forest landowners, to communicate with visitors, should put up signs that say the area is a working forest with a description of the area, including what types of trees are planted and when they will be harvested. Formal agreements for recreational access might be needed in some or all cases, including stipulations to pay a fee, to provide a fair exchange to landowners who make repairs due to ecological damage, and, sometimes, keep up facilities like privies. In Oregon, timber landowners have operated experimental fee programs for recreationists. The majority of interviewees said landowners should be paid by the state or individual recreationists for access to their land. *Public Land:* Because only 6.75 percent of Maine’s acreage is public land, an increase is needed. Maine needs a comprehensive land-use plan in order for the tourism industry to identify priority purchases rather than respond to threats regarding access and natural resource health. When purchasing new lands, the state should include long-range recreation plans because few conserved lands – especially easements – allow for the mass public like tourists. Fee purchases might be a better choice than easements because management control lessens on easements, which simply address the removal of the private party’s development rights. In the Land for Maine’s Future (LMF) program, the purchase of easements v. fee-based lands, however, has tripled. Until the year 2000, less than 10 percent of LMF conservation projects were protected by easements. Now 30 percent of LMF lands are conservation easements, and that fraction is expected to increase. An easement emphasis leads to public access problems. As land purchases of either type increase, land management will need to increase. Some believe governing entities, whether the state or regional non-profits, do not provide sufficiently for land

management. This makes some stakeholders uneasy about the ability to monitor responsibly. “(Mainers) do not see the responsible agencies as having the resources to do the monitoring, let alone bring enforcement actions,” according to the “Land for Maine’s Future Program: Increasing the Return on a Sound Public Investment” report (LMF, 2004).

*** Increase Promotion of Public Lands.** Locations and permitted uses of state lands should be more widely publicized. Most people cannot quickly locate Maine’s 47 state parks and historic sites on a map, much less the state’s more recent easement purchases. Maine needs to promote its public lands, as many are undiscovered by residents and out-of-state visitors. How can people better learn where these lands are? Many government officials claim that the Land for Maine’s Future program purchases are the answer to increasing Maine’s low percentage of public land. If this is the case, the state best make these new lands known and create recreational management plans. A problem is that not all LMF-acquired lands focus on recreational use. Still, some officials also claim that LMF-purchased lands are an alternative to the need for a proposed national park. Again, if this is the case, then the state best map out and promote these lands as recreation-rich destination spots for a mainstream audience. New state lands, in a few people’s opinion, cannot do what a second national park would accomplish. As a ranger for two seasons at Acadia National Park, I know visitors to Maine need a certain amount of handholding. Unknowledgeable about nature recreation, many visitors do not recognize cairns on a hiking trail. They want to drive up to a spot, be greeted by a friendly face, go inside a visitor center, find a bathroom and receive maps and materials that interpret the landscape. This would never happen on private or newly-acquired LMF lands. If the industry wants more tourists, especially in the hinterlands, then it needs to provide the land, facilities and interpretive materials to welcome visitors. Availability of brochures of public lands, and other simple elements, can pose huge problems for visitors. The Allagash enforces a one-map-per-party rule that frustrates larger groups whose individual members sit in different canoes. Analyzing public land interpretive products and their availability is a definite next step. Positive state publications, such as IF&W’s “On Water, On Wings, In the Woods: A Guide for Maine Wildlife Watchers” sold for \$4.95 in the mid-’90s, are no longer published (Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, 1994).

*** Create Recreation Areas for Specific Opportunities.** Designate land for specific recreational groups as a way to avoid user conflict. Not every land parcel needs to accommodate multiple recreations as

motorized and non-motorized recreationists overlap in often-unfriendly ways. Minnesota has proven motorized and non-motorized designations are possible, appropriate and doable. Most known for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness with its 1 million acres containing hundreds of lakes and rivers and 1,200 miles of canoe routes, Minnesota also has the Superior National Forest where multiple recreations and use of the forest can take place. Separate recreation areas also fit Maine stakeholders' desire to serve different recreational skill levels. Beginners might appreciate areas with easy access while hardier outdoor enthusiasts want remote access, especially without roads.

IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Summary: Fragmented planning results from tourism's competitive climate made up of many small firms and related players like landowners. Planning between the layers – whether referring to state agencies or natural resource industries – has not been smooth, either. Borderless planning needs to occur amongst industry, government, community and the private sector. Planning can lead to economic development strategies that lead to quality-of-life benefits for entrepreneurs and community members.

* **Develop a Positive Attitude Toward Tourism.** The attitude of locals toward tourism should change, in most cases, from intolerance to a welcoming message to visitors to become stewards of the environment. Stakeholders said communities dismiss tourism's role often before educated discussions can occur. Discussions, lead by industry and government officials, should be shut down only if community members have gone through an analysis of what fits in their community. In the process, residents should not be given unrealistic expectations of the industry's potential impact. Support is earned when the myths – the travel industry is too seasonal and there's nothing to do or see in the community – are dispelled. Tourism can be a part of a solution during a time of economic transition as towns reach back to discover what shaped them and put their heritage on display, yet tourism should be part of an integrated economic development strategy as the industry is just one part of a healthy economic picture.

* **Create a Master Plan.** A master plan – or matrix – can unify scattered stakeholders by providing an avenue for shared dialogue and new partnerships with communities banding together to network rather than operate in isolation. All players will need to embrace the master plan in order to create cohesiveness and to define challenges. Tourism's success depends on having clearly identified planners

who partner and seek appropriate development. An analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) can be done, including an inventory of assets. State planning models exist, such as the University of Minnesota-affiliated Tourism Center wrote the “Community Tourism Development” workbook as a self-help tool to bring communities into the tourism fold. This process allows communities to develop a new understanding of tourism while maintaining their values. The SWOT inventory will make it clear how the plan should differ community by community. New road construction or businesses, like Wal-Marts, might be right for some areas while not others. Industry representatives, as a plan is designed, must measure success the right way. A focus on operational details creates a numbers game, such as the number of management actions taken, visitors through a gate, permits issued or revenue collected. Success, instead, should measure satisfying experiences for visitors and residents and improved social, economic and environmental conditions for communities. The Hawaiian Visitor Satisfaction Activity Report, produced annually by the Hawaii State Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT), documents typical destination selection and demographic information but also satisfaction ratings of accommodations, restaurants, airports, parks, beaches and attractions as well as participation in and satisfaction with activities such as shopping, transportation and entertainment.

(http://www3.hawaii.gov/dbedt/index.cfm?section=READ_VisitorStatistics447). Maine’s plan must recognize that rural areas face special challenges, such as maintaining infrastructure. Without guidance of a plan, rural communities might not protect their cultural remnants like a dilapidated barn.

* **Give Communities a Voice.** Government and industry officials should make field visits to the state’s far-reaching communities but trust the decision-making capacity of those communities. Experts should lay out the choices and consequences of those choices but leave the outcome up to citizens. It’s important that officials respect local decisions rather than pressure a community to change to be like another area. To give communities prominence, tourism regions need better marketing and coordination. Up to now, regional marketing has translated, often, into picture booklets with little natural resource information. Those critical of the bland marketing claim Maine’s landscape has stories of place to tell. Marketing requires a certain level of financial and management resources, which many of these rural areas do not have. Local economic development councils and chambers of commerce lend assistance to the tourism cause but can’t do it alone. Tourism strategies, however, should lean toward local coordination

than formal statewide policy. And, to fit with sustainability principles, a redistribution of power must take place toward the future because present generations have to maintain options for future generations.

*** Plan for Diverse Recreation.** The Maine experience prospers due to niche recreation, and Maine has an abundance of niche recreation choices – both traditional and new – not available in other states. Growth has occurred in Maine’s outdoor recreation trips with revenues showing an approximate 40-percent increase from 2001 to 2003. Individual niche sectors have organized themselves. These include the Maine Snowmobile Association, MASKGI, Ski Maine, the Maine Professional Guides Association and the Maine Bicycle Coalition. Towns should plan for a number of nature-based activities for tourist to do, embracing both motorized and non-motorized recreation. Too few ways to engage with the landscape have existed in rural regions. The industry needs to create recreation options throughout the state. Smart entrepreneurs will diversify their tourism product to a wider audience, such as today’s family-friendly sector. Niches are at risk due to factors including insufficient infrastructure, abundant access, limited safety precautions and inadequate promotion. Many recreation forms, however, lack a niche cohesiveness, such as with birding or bicycling. Plus, natural resource lands are at risk from recreation forms that are non-compatible with their long-term health. Agriculture landowners, for instance, fear disease transmission through tourism’s multi-use trails running from one farm to another.

*** Reduce Tourism’s Impacts.** Sufficient land managers must be hired to care for parcels receiving increased public use, and, in some cases, to create and enforce limits. Some people ask what level of tourism Maine can tolerate and still having a pristine landscape to sell. Entrepreneurs should avoid overpromoting wilderness, especially if they can’t deliver on that promise. General thinking favors carrying capacity restrictions, such as limiting the number of people allowed to hike Mount Katahdin. Undeveloped areas should not receive promotion, through signage or the media, perhaps, until sufficient management is in place. Publicity materials should encourage tourists to spread out throughout the state through additional details, such as driving loops, printed on the free state map available at information centers. These promotional materials should include eco-ethic messages, such as proper access points like boat launches and safe ways to interact with the resource. Businesses have a role to play, too, to reduce their impacts through voluntary means. MASGKI requests its members reduce tour-group size to avoid crowding. State agencies should continue to dialogue with niche recreation groups to maintain good working relations

between them and other recreationists and landowners. Because motorized activities attract large numbers who often do not acknowledge the needs of the landscape or of non-motorized recreationists, motorized use should be monitored or restricted in areas where multi-use activities occur. The DOC's "ATV Program" and IF&W's "ATV Maine" formed 25 new ATV state clubs in 2005, bringing the total to more than 125, and developed an ATV video called "ATV Trail to the Future" to explain recent legal changes to clubs, dealers and landowners.

* **Build Tourism Partnerships.** The industry needs to widen the definition and inclusion of stakeholders to be as broad as possible. Support should come from chambers of commerce, clubs, historical societies, lodging, youth organizations, ecology associations and churches. Land trusts and communities can partner, too, to decide what parcels to protect. The state should encourage private/public partnerships and organize volunteer efforts. Stakeholders should, then, hold each other accountable to keep to the plan and act as watchdog groups. In Australia, the Tourism Council's Environmental Code of Practice is formed in consultation with multiple group support, including conservation organizations, industry bodies and planning authorities. In Maine, the Piscataquis County Economic Development Council deserves credit for bringing multiple stakeholders together to create a countywide tourism focus certain to achieve results (The Piscataquis Tourism Task Force, 2005). Partnerships can offer better interpretive products to distribute to tourists to improve the industry's value. The "Cobscook Trails: A guide to walking opportunities around Cobscook Bay and the Bold Coast" is a 44-page brochure, printed by The Nature Conservancy, was developed by private and public conservation organizations who own and manage conservation lands in the area to expand nature-based recreation opportunities in eastern Washington County. Conservation organizations participating include: The Nature Conservancy, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Quoddy Regional Land Trust, IF&W, DOC, BPL, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge. The book, which details stewardship guidelines, is reprinted so participating organizations can change which 13 trails are included to lessen the visitation impact as land trusts selectively publicize to assure sufficient management (Quoddy Regional Land Trust, 2000).

* **Develop Destination Tourism.** Locations will be put on the figurative tourism map when infrastructure and things-to-do options exist. Additional tourism centers are suggested to give potential locations, primarily in inland Maine, visibility. Consolidating in-depth information centers in gateway

communities can allow the industry to disperse people in different directions, telling them what to expect along planned routes. These centers can link visitors with the area's tourism businesses. Freeport's L.L. Bean, although not an official center, should be considered to have statewide influence. As the No. 1 tourist destination, L.L. Bean can link mainstream visitors with the state's smaller entrepreneurs, many of whom the store has teamed with to sell outdoor trips. Models exist to add destinations to the tourism route. New Brunswick spreads tourists out with its Day Adventure program that offers more than 70 options for tourists, organized by Fredericton's Department of Economic Development and Tourism (<http://www.fabuloustravel.com/adventures/nbeco/nbeco.html>). The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has crafted the Pennsylvania Wilds program through the governor's office to gain visibility to the north central part of the state with 1.6 million acres of state forest and game lands, including 27 state parks, while supporting local planning, encouraging the private sector and investing in facilities. A government task force brought together all the resource agencies, and the tourism office designed marketing that is sensitive to capacities and stewardship with ecological policies, such as a moratorium on ATV trails in the state forest. (<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/info/pawilds/about.aspx>). If Maine implements development programs like Pennsylvania's, most believe the state can have benefits of a national park without having a second national park. Right now, much of inland Maine is not accessible to the average tourist. Many recreationists do not experience far-off locations because they cannot find the trailheads, often on unmarked private or non-profit land. Especially in Western Maine, insufficient signage hampers finding destinations. Incorporating a federal designation, as the Maine Mountain Heritage Network is attempting, might be the best option in these rural areas to develop tourism Area (<http://www.mainemountains.org>).

*** Be Upfront with Tourists about Infrastructure.** Tourists need accurate destination information, especially regarding infrastructure, to guide them to select the right location for their physical abilities. Communities, therefore, must be responsible to talk honestly about themselves and prepare visitors, especially for primitive experiences, by telling them of the reality beforehand. A false advertising message should not be presented to lure tourists to a community. Too little infrastructure can shock unknowing tourists and cause them to never return to an area again. Towns should wait to encourage tourism, perhaps, until the infrastructure exists. Most stakeholders favor minimal infrastructure to not to

overwhelm or change a community aesthetically or ecologically. Infrastructure, in fact, is not recommended in wilderness areas in order to provide a natural landscape that enhances the visitor experience. Increased infrastructure, however, has benefits in most areas to add to the attractiveness of a community and the ability to enjoy an area, even a primitive one. Infrastructure should be designed to blend in, through the color, size or position on a lot. The addition of roads, however, should be more carefully considered because they can more drastically change an area.

* **Build Cooperation Between Natural Resource Industries.** To Mainers, the working land is part of the state's identity, and to out-of-state tourists, it is part of Maine's attraction. Visitors come because of the quaint communities, with lobster boats or logging trucks, that are anything but manufactured. Ideally, one natural resource use, like tourism, shouldn't negatively impact another use, like forestry. Stakeholders believe compatibility is possible as the industries compliment each other. Roads built for timber harvesting, for example, provide access to rafters to the rivers. Agriculture keeps land open for tourists to see. The strength of one natural resource industry, such as tourism, can help keep the others strong. To better the relationship amongst the groups, the industries need to sit down together to dialogue about minimizing conflicts. Aquaculture and tourism clash, for example, when sightseeing boats have difficulty navigating around pens. When clearing land, foresters go on the defensive to ask that their industry's aesthetic damage be understood as temporary to tourists. These ongoing industry clashes result in a tone of disrespect.

CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE BRANDING CAMPAIGN

Summary: Heated debate has occurred in Maine around the entire branding topic with most concluding it would be difficult to pinpoint a single brand. Choosing one brand across the five natural resource industries is said to be problematic. In this study, only 15 of the 43 interviewees made branding-related comments, demonstrating the majority are unknowledgeable about the topic rather than for or against the development of a single brand. What has been concluded is the connection of "quality" to Maine's brand. The "quality" component appears to fit all the natural resource sectors.

* **Turn a Brand Into a Planning Tool.** A branding campaign encompassing sustainable tourism principles can serve the industry by protecting Maine's nature-based image while promoting it. The "It Must Be Maine" brand appears on the Office of Tourism ads, but it does not have the teeth behind it to

legislate ecological protections and key economic strategies, such as improved roads and interpretative signage. Benefits of branding include: providing accurate expectations to potential visitors; giving the small entrepreneur visibility; sending a welcoming tone to visitors while identifying behavior expectations; using an intertwined image of the natural and cultural resources; layering sub-brands to regions within the state; and encouraging entrepreneurs to receive stewardship training. Although detrimental effects occur, such as potential increased visitation to fragile areas, a branding strategy can result in quality experiences for both mainstream and niche recreationists. The industry should not fear publicity through branding but rather should create systems that encourage human connections to nature. As a statewide brand is solidified, demand will exist for smaller regional brands. This will be an important step as regional differences, up to now, have been pushed aside or weakened the unified branding concept.

* **Consider the Value of Certification.** Affiliations can help a product sell itself. The Colony Inn in Kennebunkport might be a master of using affiliations. It proudly displays membership to the following organizations in its entrance: Green Hotels Association, Maine Businesses for Social Responsibility, National Wildlife Federation, The Kennebunk Land Trust and more. It brands itself, printing “Maine’s First Environmentally Responsible Hotel” on its brochures. Maine could brand itself in a similar way through a formal certification, or ecolabelling, program. Certification, requiring applicants to meet certain standards, could be used as part of a branding strategy. Green certification has been done around the world, such as in Sweden, Australia and Canada, to build consumer-driven returns with enhanced environmental practices. Potential nature-based visitors would be drawn to the ecolabel program, providing economic returns if the providers deliver on what the label promises. A statewide voluntary accreditation program could allow the industry to assess itself and provide feedback to entrepreneurs applying for certification. Key to the ecolabel’s success would be a stringent assessment, so certification holds respect within Maine and outside the state. The Office of Tourism, which produces generic ads so not to favor one business over another, could promote the ecolabel in its marketing material by naming individual certified businesses.

* **Assess Branding’s Accuracy.** Is Maine’s brand, especially as wilderness territory, a reality? Some environmentalists worry that the state’s wild image – if not the real thing – could disappear. Branding must present an accurate picture, avoiding unrealistic resource promises like guaranteed wildlife sightings. The industry needs to send out an accurate message before, during and after a visit. Sharing the

message early on can lead to a stewardship mindset. Minimum impact practices can be emphasized with a Leave-No-Trace training opportunity. Some stakeholders felt only projects incorporating a stewardship element should be backed by the state, whether through funding, marketing or networking.

NEXT STEPS

Today's tourism industry should continue to build on what Cornelia T. Crosby started as the first paid person to promote Maine tourism in the late 1800s. Hired by Maine Central Railroad, she represented the state in several Sportsmen's Expositions, including the 1895 premiere in New York City. This outdoors woman, known as Fly Rod Crosby, spent much of her time in western Maine working as a journalist and writing about traditional recreation (Hunter & Shettleworth, 2000). As word spread regarding the state's scenic landscape, Maine's natural resources – mountains, forests, ponds and ocean – attracted visitors and do still 100 years later. Maine has transformed from an extractive resource-based economy into a recreation-based economy with tourism as Maine's No. 1 industry, which no one disputes. Tourism if too concentrated, however, can upset the landscape, causing some communities to no longer want it in their backyard. "The social fabric of resident communities can be disrupted by conflict and dissension with visitors and by congestion and overtaxing of the infrastructure and basic services" (Pigram, 2000). The state's tourism players, without clarity on many levels, are going their own way, with conflicting or duplicating results concerning such issues as contentious multiple-use recreation, limited land access and lacking infrastructure. Comprehensive research that can lead to policy recommendations and economic development solutions, therefore, should be initiated.

Maine's tourism research, up to this point, has been wide and shallow. Examples include economics of cruise ships, tourism wage analysis, niche recreation studies (snowmobiles and ATVs), marketing, broad opinion surveys and state agency reports. On the quantitative side, more needs to be known regarding where tourists are going throughout the state due to today's stagnant U.S. market and declining northeastern market. Which locations successfully draw visitors to Maine should be better defined. Anecdotally, L.L. Bean is believed to be the top attraction with Acadia National Park as the second. Surprisingly, visitors are coming to Maine to shop, perhaps, more than to view wildlife. What is the third most attended attraction and so on is not known. Better numbers, including those that measure

satisfaction levels, are needed to understand the industry because the tourism industry needs to remain strong to support the state's historic economic landscape. On the qualitative side, more stakeholder interviews are needed, as evidenced by the desire of this study's participants to share their opinions. Interviewees presented passionate demeanors during lengthy interviews, lasting approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes, indicating genuine concern for the state of the tourism industry. Stakeholders particularly identified hindrances, sometimes through very strong language, as they verbalized how to improve on Maine's image and future. Participants wanted their tourism comments to be passed on, whether in legislative documents, agency reports or scholarly works. They were thrilled that someone – particularly a representative of the state – would ask their opinion for, possibly, the first time. Subtleties of what was said allude to the complexity of the industry, for instance, through the varying use of the definitions of sustainable tourism, nature-based tourism and ecotourism; truthfulness emerges, perhaps, from between the lines of what stakeholders say. What this study adds to the wider body of tourism literature is the importance of stakeholder dialogue as a way to identify and solve problems in a large area, such as an entire state.

Findings of this study reflect the disorder of the industry as interviewees indicate discontent with the state and the leadership, acting in a reactive instead of a proactive mode. This research, offering a clearer understanding of stakeholder desires, can guide industry leaders to take actions to gain long-term buy-in and commitment from the state's varied players. The MTC's Natural Resources Committee (NRC) has used the 43 stakeholder interviews to produce its own list of principle issues in a report for the Office of Tourism (Natural Resources Committee, 2005). The committee focused, overall, on analyzing issues, as I have, rather than making recommendations because individual issues have to be studied more before recommendations can be made. Future research could do a better job identifying interrelated problems before making recommendations. The NRC continues to assist the Office of Tourism and keep interviewees' points in mind as the group analyzes the suggested Fermata pilot projects. The University of Maine system, including extension, should be added as a key education player to teach industry members the principles of sustainability and to instruct communities to use a matrix for mapping out their own tourism strategies.

This study's conclusions reflect current tourism research in two key ways. First, interest exists in the greening of the industry. Second, both ask: What is it that we are trying to sustain – the image, market, environment, revenues, human and natural resources and quality experiences? “Rather than dealing with a predefined set of value judgments about what is good economic development, this question encourages civic engagement, discourse and deliberation about the role of tourism in a community” (McCool, 2004). A sustainable plan is believed to have the ability to move the tourism industry toward a more desirable and acceptable future. That future place, however, cannot look like what Maine has now in the political or built environment. Maine's tourism players must choose consciously what is to be sustained to provide the desired result. Until more research is done in and outside the state, especially regarding Maine's brand, the state's image should not be re-defined.

Focus should be placed on the different roles for the different players to keep the state preserved and prosperous. Communities need to demand practices that are sustainable by approving only what projects they find acceptable – in type, location, design and operation of tourism developments. Businesses need to develop voluntary codes of conduct that protect the landscape while promoting it. The International Hotels Environmental Initiative, for example, creates environmental awareness through its 1992 manual that addresses waste management, energy consumption, noise and congestion, purchasing policy and staff training. Tourists must be inserted into the sustainable tourism strategy, too, by demonstrating awareness of the environmental implications of their own activities, as well as in demanding high environmental standards from facilities and operations (Pigram, 2000).

Due to a lack of specific goals, tourism has become a squishy topic with no measurable objectives to guide our assessment of progress or impacts. Maine can benefit by examining tourism programs in other states, perhaps through the use of World Tourism Organization (WTO) statistics. The university needs to become a member of the WTO to have access to this data. I challenge the industry, the state and the legislature to be experimental. For example, let the Office of Tourism stand as its own department rather than under the authority of the Department of Community and Economic Development. Next, change the Office of Tourism's mandate so the office can approach natural resource management agencies and other state agencies, such as the Department of Transportation, with development ideas and funding to be better received by agencies with limited dollars. In addition, create an interagency tourism body so no one agency

is burdened with researching, planning or funding. Finally, add a legislative committee specific to tourism's concerns. One big problem is that Maine needs more than 6.75 percent of public land to promote sustainable tourism on a nature basis. Of Maine's 19.75 million acres, only 600,000 acres of state land allows for public use. Easements, according to tourism stakeholders, are not the answer even though the state is increasing its purchase of easements. Additional research is highly recommended in examining the short- and long-term implications of easements to tourism development. Another big problem is a lack of funding for everything from state parks to private land infrastructure. Although the state should redirect some of the income from fees and tax revenues, these dollars will not be enough to sustain the industry. Surprisingly, there is no capital program for parks and historic sites. Because of this, many historic buildings are deteriorating. During the past 30 years, only two bonds raised money for park infrastructure. To gain access to additional monies, new avenues must be pursued. A federal designation in inland Maine, perhaps, could garner funds as well as create destinations to regions struggling to put themselves on the map. The Maine Mountain Heritage Network, which oversees Oxford, Franklin, Somerset and Piscataquis counties, has applied for a federal cultural heritage designation to net potentially \$1 million per year for 10 years in funding to support regional heritage-based projects and marketing (<http://www.mainemountains.org>). In conclusion, tourism's future depends on more analysis of stakeholder input so industry leaders can have buy-in from varied players and can guide policy. In the process, the industry needs to measure success by the quality of the experience, which will ensure return visitation with economic, ecological and cultural benefits.

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Appendix A: FIVE-QUESTION SURVEY FROM THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. How would you describe the present state of Maine's tourism industry and its relationship to the natural resources of the state?
 - a. How would you describe the infrastructure of the industry, either across the state, in your region, or in your specific field of interest?
 - i. With what activities/industry sectors are you most familiar?
 - ii. What trends have you observed in those activities/industry sectors?
 - b. What are the impacts that you see the industry having on the state's natural resources, again either statewide, regionally, or in your specific field?
 - i. What resources are getting the greatest pressure?
 - ii. What resources are under-utilized?
2. In your opinion, based on what you know about Maine's utilization of its natural resources for recreation and tourism, what do you feel is being done well? Please provide examples wherever possible.
3. In your opinion, based on what you know about Maine's utilization of its natural resources for recreation and tourism, what do you feel is being done poorly? Please provide examples wherever possible.
4. Based on your response to the previous two questions please provide recommendations for action that could be implemented by public and/or private entities that you feel would support or enhance what is being done well and correct what is being done poorly.
5. If you were to describe an ideal for the industry and its relationship to Maine's natural resources in the next five years what would it be? Please provide examples wherever possible.

Appendix B: INTERVIEW LIST OF NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE'S STAKEHOLDERS

Agricultural Council of Maine (AGCOM), private group of Maine agricultural commodity trade associations based in Augusta

Richard Anderson, former commissioner of the Department of Conservation, former executive director of Maine Audubon, president of the International Appalachian Trail and vice president of the Coastal Conservation Association in Yarmouth

Jane Arbuckle, director of stewardship at the Maine Coast Heritage Trust in Brunswick

Nathaniel Bowditch, assistant director of the Maine Office of Tourism in Augusta

Kevin Boyle, Ph. D., University of Maine's Resource Economics and Policy professor in Orono

Irvin Caverly, director of Baxter State Park in Millinocket

Garrett Conover, co-owner of North Woods Ways guiding business in Willimantic

Laurie Cormier, owner of Big Moose Inn, Cabins & Campground in Millinocket

Albro Cowperthwaite, executive director of the non-profit North Maine Woods Inc. in Ashland

Charles Davis, Ellsworth center director for Maine Small Business Development Center and co-director of Coastal Acadia Development Corporation in Ellsworth

Gary Donovan, wildlife biologist for International Paper in Bucksport

Sean Faircloth, democratic state representative based out of Bangor

Paul Fichtner, owner of Big Lake Equipment in Greenville and owner of Penobscot Lake Lodge in T4R5/T3R5

Dave Field, Ph. D., chair of the University of Maine's Department of Forest Management, chair emeritus of the Board of Managers of the Appalachian Trail Conference (now called the Appalachian Trail Conservancy) and overseer of lands for the Maine Appalachian Trail Club

Kip Files, owner of the three-masted schooner called the Victory Chimes out of Rockland

Gil Gilpatrick, retired canoe guide from Skowhegan and author of six books, two of which are on the Allagash, and columnist for the monthly "North Woods Sporting Journal" in Enfield

Theresa Hoffman, executive director of the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance, which owns the Wabanaki Arts Center Gallery in Old Town

Eric Hopkins, painting gallery owner on North Haven and artist-in-residence at Acadia National Park

Sheila Jans, senior fellow at the Quebec Labrador Foundation of the Atlantic Center for the Environment at a field desk in Madawaska in the St. John Valley

Andy Kekacs, publisher/owner of the electronic newsletter "Maine Woodsman"

Gabrielle Kissinger, northern regional conservation director of the Appalachian Mountain Club in Augusta

Matt Libby, president of Libby Sporting Camps Inc. in Ashland

Carl Little, director of communications and marketing for the Maine Community Foundation in Ellsworth

Sally M. Littlefield, co-owner of the Oakland House Seaside Resort in Brooksville on the Penobscot Bay

Jeff McEvoy, owner of Weatherby's inn in Grand Lake Stream

Sarah Medina, land use director for Seven Islands Land Company in Bangor

Bob Meyers, executive director of the Maine Snowmobile Association in Augusta

Ken Olson, president of Friends of Acadia in Bar Harbor

Bucky Owen, former commissioner of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and University of Maine wildlife ecology professor in Orono

Matt Polstein, owner of the New England Outdoor Center in Millinocket

John Simko, Greenville town manager and former Sangerville town manager

Lee Sochasky, executive director of the St. Croix International Waterway Commission in Calais

Natalie Springuel, marine extension associate for Maine Sea Grant and former private sea kayak guide in Bar Harbor

Jym St. Pierre, Maine director of RESTORE: The North Woods in Hallowell

Ken Spalding, Maine Woods project coordinator of RESTORE: The North Woods in Hallowell

Joel Swanton, International Paper's manager of forest ecology, forest resources for the Northeast region in Bucksport

Greg Sweetser, executive director of Ski Maine in Portland

Dianne Tilton, executive director of the non-profit Sunrise County Economic Council in Machias

Thomas Urquhart, partner in Urquhart & Spritz consulting firm in Portland

Gloria Varney, co-owner of Nezinscot Farm in Turner

Judy Walker, Maine Audubon naturalist and director of the Environmental Center at Gilsland Farm in Falmouth

Larry Warren, executive director of the Western Mountains Foundation, creating the Mahoosuc-Moosehead trail and former Sugarloaf Ski Resort manager in Carrabasset Valley

Steve Wight, owner of Sunday River Inn in Newry and commissioner on Land Use Regulation Commission

Appendix C: A SWOT ANALYSIS OF NICHE RECREATION

To sense how one aspect of Maine's tourism landscape could be categorized, an example SWOT analysis has been done. Comments on niche recreation have been broken down into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The threats are so many that they are broken up into general threats, cooperation threats and ecological threats.

- **Strengths:** The Maine experience, one could argue, prospers due to niche recreation. People come with one activity in mind, whether hiking, biking, snowmobile, kayaking, skiing, fishing, birding or culture-seeking. Maine, thanks to its tall mountains, peaceful lakes, rapid streams and calling coastline, has an abundance of nature-based tourism choices not available in other states. The bright spot within Maine's niche recreation is that some individual sectors have formally organized themselves. These include the Maine Snowmobile Association, the Maine Association of Sea Kayak Guide and Instructors, the Maine Windjammers Association, Ski Maine, the Maine Sporting Camp Association and the Maine Bicycle Coalition. The niche emphasis offers a means for those in a sector to set standards, to reach each other efficiently and to enjoy economies of scale through joint marketing.

In an effort to support the niches, Maine can develop industrywide sustainable tourism principles. "Sea kayaking has done it specifically but even not sea kayakers do it on principles of recycling or energy efficiency," said Natalie Springuel, marine extension associate for Maine Sea Grant and former private sea kayak guide in Bar Harbor. "These standards could be what make Maine jump off the map."

Maine echoes the national trend for soft adventure niches like watchable wildlife, cross-country skiing and hiking. High adventure, like white water rafting, exists but has seen a change in clientele. This shift indicates people desire low-key ways to unwind from stressful urban workweeks. "There has been a change in my business away from high adventure," said Matt Polstein, owner of the New England Outdoor Center in Millinocket. "White water has a narrow focus, and it's growing narrower. We thought rafting would sell the lodging, but we realize that lodging will sell the rafting." The new soft adventure surge is not to say that traditional recreation forms, like hunting and fishing, are any less important. Although traditional use has leveled off, Maine considers it a prime market, too, with attempts to gain more of the regional market share. "Most sporting camps couldn't stay in business if they only had business from

hunters and fishermen because it's too short a season," said Sarah Medina, land use director for Seven Islands Land Company based in Bangor. Sporting camps, which began in the late 1800s to provide shelter and meals, are marketing to a wider audience such as family vacationers for a bird-watching weekend or a rare plant search.

Maine combats the seasonal visitation effect, high in the summer and low in the winter, by grabbing hold of year-round activities that prove crucial economically to inland areas. Snowmobiling, as a winter sport, has expanded into 13,000 miles of trails, as part of the Interconnected Trail System, with 290 Maine Snowmobile Association clubs made up of 14,500 families and 22,000 businesses. In economic-speak, snowmobiling provides the equivalent of 3,200 full-time jobs. Some inland stakeholders indicate that without snowmobiling, Greenville would be dead. "We have the ITS that goes around Moosehead Lake," said Paul Fichtner, owner of Big Lake Equipment in Greenville and of Penobscot Lake Lodge, which is 60 miles northwest on the Canadian border. "We have people from all over, including Minnesota, getting here on it." Greenville, it is said, has the opportunity to be the snowmobile capital of the Northeast.

The Maine guide is an icon with its own niche. The first Maine guide's license was issued in 1897 to Cornelia "Fly Rod" Crosby, and more than 100 years later, guides still provide a real market identity and a quality tourism experience. They are seen as leaders in the industry with their own organization, the Maine Professional Guides Association, and with a national following. "The Maine coast work has become a nationwide example of whale watching, puffin tours and kayaking," Springuel said. The Maine guiding industry has been asked to speak at conferences around the United States. Inn owners rely on networking with guides who entertain clients in a friendly and informative manner in the same way the inn's staff would. "The people who work with the clients the most are guides who don't actually work for me," said Jeff McEvoy, owner of Weatherby's inn in Grand Lake Stream. "They are really the face of Maine."

The face of Maine, perhaps, is the Maine guide or possibly the Maine artist and the other Mainers who keep the state's rich culture alive. Deer Isle attracts artisans, due in part to its sophisticated-but-rustic Haystack Mountain School of Crafts established there more than 50 years ago. The four-week summer school lures beginners and advanced artists who work in every medium from fiber to wood. Keeping the past alive, too, are the windjammers that provide more than a boat ride. The windjammer, engraved on the back of the new Maine state quarter, used to carry potatoes and now carries passengers. The boats provide a

culturally authentic experience. Without this tourist industry, the knowledge of how to sail schooners would have disappeared. Schooners carried potatoes and all sorts of Maine foods in their cargo. Today, Maine's many unique restaurants tell the local food story. Ecotourism principles applaud restaurants' use of locally grown food and recipes that highlight the Maine culture. Some restaurants, such as the Harraseeket Inn in Freeport, are rated for their excellence of incorporating local produce, seafood and game.

Finally, Maine's rich menu of things to do can lead the visitor to a fulfilling experience – even if it's not the one that the visitor intended. Other states, without such a broad array of choices, cannot satisfy the visitor when plans alter. Those traveling to Baxter State Park might find themselves too late to be part of the daily limit allowed to hike Mt. Katahdin, but the wilderness area still offers other mountains to hike. Tourists who arrive at Mt. Katahdin's parking lot after 7:30 a.m. are out of luck. "So we ask if they would like to hike one of the other 47 mountains," said Irvin "Buz" Caverly, director of Baxter State Park in Millinocket. "We help ... so that it's not a wasted trip from Bangor to Millinocket for them." Tourism stakeholders need to nurture these types of options throughout the state.

- **Weaknesses:** Many niches, such as birding and bicycling, remain undeveloped, lacking an understanding of their potential in the Maine nature-based tourism landscape. These niches typically lack the necessary infrastructure to provide recreational options.

The state falls short in how it financially supports the individual niches. Snowmobilers have partial funding through a state gas tax and registration fees, but most niches have nothing. A Ski Maine representative argues the state should distribute funding to all recreation niches because his organization, a trade association organized in 1960 representing 18 alpine ski areas, has had to make it all on its own. "If the state was looking at funding the infrastructure in other parts of Maine, we'd say, 'Let's make it a level playing field because we have built all of our infrastructure,'" said Greg Sweetser, executive director of Ski Maine in Portland, "and we don't want to miss out on funding."

The state doesn't give credit to niches when it is due, too, according to some stakeholders. States that have indigenous people typically can draw more tourists, making it good for the economy. Alaska, for example, highlights its Native American connections as part of the ecotourism experience. Many of Maine's Native Americans do not feel valued by the legislature or the Office of Tourism for their tourism potential, especially with their new Wabanaki art gallery in Old Town. "We are the only native-owned

nonprofit art gallery in all of the Northeast,” said Theresa Hoffman, executive director of the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance, which owns the Wabanaki Arts Center Gallery in Old Town. “It’s short-sighted that this is not recognized.” The 7,000 Wabanaki people, who enrich Maine’s identity, are not seen as a cultural treasure.

A continued lack of organized leadership keeps most weak niches in a fragile state unable to reach their potential. It’s difficult for the niches without a centralized member organization to gain funds or recognition. Bicycling, for instance, is one of these. A few private citizens have voiced their opinion through a bicycle advisory committee for the Maine Department of Transportation suggesting adding wider road shoulders and converting old rail beds into trails. A Bangor-to-Calais route has been heavily pushed, but who has the power to make it happen? Bicycling, a well-known Canadian niche, could add to Maine’s economy if space – literal space – is made for it. From a safety perspective, the rural road system doesn’t have a sufficient shoulder. If the state took this on, winter communities, like Carrabassett Valley, could be valuable 12 months of the year. Niches without developed leadership, such as birding or agritourism, have trouble becoming developed. Birding succeeds in Texas because one phone call from a visitor garners all sorts of detailed birding brochures. When the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce, in Texas, receives a call, it asks if the caller wants a birding checklist with maps, directions and road sign alerts. Potential Maine niches can gain ground only if the necessary information is out there to inform recreationists. In Maine, IF&W and the Department of Transportation should jointly produce a birding map and a bicycle map, said Judy Walker, a Maine Audubon staff naturalist and director of the Environmental Center at Gilsland Farm in Falmouth. Agritourism struggles to gain visibility in a state ironically praised for its quality milk production and open fields. Farm bed-and-breakfasts – that offer corn mazes, pumpkin rides and pick-your-own produce – should unite, according to agritourism representatives, because they are unsuccessful while non-farm B&Bs have developed linkages. Maine tourism depends on agriculture’s continuation because touring Maine will not be the same without scenic views of open fields filled with black-and-white Holsteins. What has been done for agriculture? The Agricultural Corridors project, a state enacted proposal, draws travelers to the back roads through increased signage, and Open Farm Day, the last Sunday in July, has been a successful part of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources.

As for traditional recreation, the Office of Tourism talks the talk of supporting it but does not register to be at the sportsmen's shows. Every time a show comes along, retired canoe guide Gil Gilpatrick from Skowhegan said, stakeholders learn the state is not going because it cannot afford it. Perhaps this is because the state assumes the public has lost interest in hunting rather. "Tourism steps away from hunting in Maine whereas in Montana they promote it," said Matt Libby, president of Libby Sporting Camps Inc. in Ashland. Traditional recreation stakeholders are frustrated by the lack of initiative on the state's part and would like the state to educate the public on the sport.

Niches can lack civility toward each other. The most destructive link appears to be the growing ATV domain. ATVers present themselves as facing the same prejudices snowmobilers faced 30 years ago, but snowmobilers don't buy this line. "ATVs seem to be an outlaw culture," said Bob Meyers, executive director of the Maine Snowmobile Association. "We, as snowmobilers, have lost trails due to ATVs. There is a common misconception among people who buy ATVs that 'There is a trail, and I am good to go.' The snowmobile clubs will put up 'No ATV' signs, and the signs are quickly ripped down." ATVers have organized clubs to be a point of contact with the public. A state taskforce assists, too. ATV club members seek permission to go on landowners' property the same way the snowmobilers do, through an in-writing method, but the ATV plea doesn't seem to be working. Stakeholders, who have tried to talk with local ATV groups, ask that some trails be off limits, perhaps to include foot-traffic only. A Grand Lake Stream inn owner found dialogue about re-routing trails to fall on deaf ears, even on state-owned land. "I know ATVs are important to the local economy, but if there is a way we can re-route the trail, we should. When I say 'trail,' it's actually a paved road and then uses the snowmobile trail to connect," McEvoy said. "I think there is no such thing as multi-use where ATVs are because any place that has ATVs basically is unfriendly to others, and it becomes by default an ATV trail." The state needs to step in here to bring ATVers in line.

Finally, any particular niche, even if organized, can prove to be too diverse to speak clearly for its industry. Not all organized clubs turn out to be everything to everyone. The Maine Professional Guides Association, for instance, does not satisfy all its 800 members. It has chosen purposefully to not say much about certain issues because its members approach them differently. Some guides would like to see a non-motorized guide group while others would like to develop a regional Allagash Wilderness Waterway group. Even if an Allagash guide group existed, it would have its differences as bear hunting guides, for example,

want a bridge across the Allagash to hunt while other guides want as few access points as possible. “There might be guides who would be against what the Allagash guides want,” Libby said, “I’d rather see a local guide group than a statewide one with a guide from Wells making up rules for the Allagash.” An Allagash group might be a step in the right direction.

- **Opportunities:** Perceived opportunities have sparked the sustainable tourism dialogue. The industry attempts to minimize weaknesses while it seeks to build opportunities. Some politicians identify wildlife watching as a more lucrative opportunity than Maine’s traditional recreation. This idea follows an article state Rep. Sean Faircloth (D-Bangor) saw in a state legislators’ professional magazine that came across his desk. “If you look at the statistics, the younger demographics are not hunting as much,” Faircloth said. “These people are going out and looking at birding.” Economists believe diversification will move people to those areas, resulting in enough volume to feed the businesses.

Traditional inland businesses try to gain the best of both worlds by gearing their tourism product to the new family-friendly recreationists instead of the few hardy hunters who probably will show up anyway. Who will succeed are the traditional recreation businesses that broaden their clientele. Libby Sporting Camps promotes increased female participation in the male-dominated sport of hunting, for example. It held an Audubon-sponsored ladies-only hunting weekend. “I don’t make excuses for the hunting and fishing we do, but I promote it,” Libby said. “I think some of the camps are asking, ‘Are you not a hunter?’ instead of getting them started in it. Hunting isn’t necessary killing.” A woman can use a hunting dog to find prey but does not have to kill it.

Beyond massaging the traditional recreation image, Maine has the opportunity to move strongly into the newer non-motorized recreation forms like biking, birding, kayaking, skiing and hiking. Infrastructure, such as trails and docks, are needed to attract recreationists wanting to explore these niches. Some stakeholders have been outraged at the lack of biking infrastructure. One Mainer, to make his point, travels afar to bike and then sends a postcard to the Maine governor. “We went to the Danube to bike for two weeks,” said Bucky Owen, former commissioner of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife (IF&W) and retired University of Maine wildlife ecology professor. “We sent a postcard to the governor saying that we spent \$1,500 each while biking that we’d rather have spent biking in Maine, but there are no bike trails here. No

one has the leadership to say that we've got these old rail beds to develop this and take by eminent domain if necessary." One quiet recreationist did his own informal survey of who are visiting Maine. "While driving on the Maine Turnpike between Kittery and Auburn," said Ken Spalding, the Maine Woods project coordinator of RESTORE: The North Woods in Hallowell, "I saw six vehicles with ATVs but saw more with bikes and even more with kayaks." Converting former or non-primary logging roads into bike trails, he said, on lands dedicated to recreation rather than timber production would provide a marketable recreational resource. The opportunity exists to connect with these quiet recreationists and realize that economic potential.

Birding has been given little credit as a valued Maine niche despite the proliferation of the puffin, a state icon. When a rare ivory gull visited Maine a couple years ago for an eight-day period, it brought in an estimated \$40,000 into the Portland area from increased visitation, including birders from as far away as South America, according to Maine Audubon. The opportunity for birding is discounted by some Mainers who indicate that Maine's birds – the loon, the gull and the eagle amongst others – can be seen other places. Birding, as a sport, can be exciting to birders despite the fact that possibly fewer Maine-specific species exist. Interest in birding appears to be growing as measured through response to a Maine Audubon weekly online bird alert. "It's not the point that there are not birds here that aren't other places," said Thomas Urquhart, partner in the Urquhart & Spritz consulting firm in Falmouth. "For every birder who won't go to Maine because he or she wants to see the whooping cranes in Texas, others will come to Maine for their state list, including the boreal chickadee and winter duck. The birder who is trying to see all 9,000 species in the world would be unlikely to want to come to Maine, but that is just not that many people. Birders as a group use it as an organizing principle to get outdoors." To say that Maine doesn't have enough bird diversity to attract birders is like saying it's silly to have a Maine museum trail because there are no good Van Goghs here, Urquhart added. Rather than putting energy into deciding the worth of a niche, the industry has the opportunity to help businesses cater to the individual niche recreation markets. To choose a place to stay, birders, for instance, would like to have a list of B&Bs that have the coffee ready at 4:30 instead of 7 in the morning. They would support these unique hospitality locations that give back to the community, stakeholders said, over a chain hotel.

The ocean fishing niche, which claims to offer world-class fishing experiences, gets little credit, too, despite its somewhat more traditional recreation roots. The Coastal Conservation Association promotes the sport, listing approximately 50 guides on its Web site. No tourism brochures include a picture of a striped bass, according to the association. With a high number of ready guides and equipment as solid infrastructure, ocean fishing appears to make sense.

Opportunities could exist even for ATV use if the infrastructure were there. Appropriate activity, especially within potentially destructive niches, occurs only if recreationists are provided with designated infrastructure. The ATV niche puzzles Greenville's Big Lake Equipment owner who has been in the four-wheeler business three times but stopped stocking inventory after certain anti-ATV customers threatened to boycott and put his rental business in economic danger. Nonetheless, the ATV crisis needs to be solved because ATVers need some place to ride while the inland region needs related economic income. The "Economic Contributions of ATV-Related Activities in Maine" report, prepared by the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center and the Maine Department of Conservation, estimates \$156 million in net spending through the state's 59,000 registered riders (University of Maine, 2005). "If we had a place for these people to ride, then these people wouldn't have been riding on someone else's property," Fichtner said. "I don't feel like I can step up to the plate again to figure this out, but if someone doesn't come in soon, then we will lose the market. We have nothing else in the shoulder seasons of spring and fall." To assist ATVers in a different part of the state, International Paper is proud to pioneer an ATV trail in Washington County. The trail will encompass 400 miles of International Paper land with 300 additional miles. Designated trails, as part of infrastructure planning, can lessen threats from taking hold, but as the next section will show, damage occurs if oversight lessens.

- **General threats:** Threats to recreation are so pervasive that this study has broken them into three pieces: general threats, business threats and ecological threats. This portion focuses on the general threats. If Maine's niches are not supported, recreation options will dissipate.

General factors put recreation at risk – not enough infrastructure, too much access, low safety awareness and inadequate promotion, for example.

A lack of regional infrastructure hinders the industry. Infrastructure questions need to be answered on a broader level. If the industry wants to move people into inland Maine to see birds, how will they be

housed? Will there be a hotel or clean bathroom every 15 miles? Areas struggle without sufficient answers to infrastructure. Rural ski areas, for instance, could grow if their bed base would grow. Squaw Mountain in Greenville, Mount Abram in Greenwood and Big Rock in Mars Hill are big enough to attract a high number of visitors, but the beds in the region are limited. Sugarloaf in Carrabassett Valley and Sunday River Ski Resort in Newry are the ones that have been able to build their bed base.

Some old-school business owners are still unsure of the rise of the “softer” recreation forms. A shift away from traditional recreation threatens their future. One Maine sporting camp, which promotes hunting exclusively, was so fierce in its pro-hunting position that it hung a dead, bloody coyote in front of its camp. Businesses like this will not last for economic reasons alone. “If you own a sporting camp and you don’t cater to those people who like to take pictures,” Polstein said, “you are going out of business.” Those in the industry in favor of traditional recreation speak loudly. Bear hunting, although a small portion of the overall hunting niche, brings significant income to individual entrepreneurs. Many Maine hunters were relieved when a proposed 2004 state referendum that would have made it a crime to hunt bear with baiting, traps or dogs was defeated. If it had passed, gate fees to northern Maine forest lands would have increased, according to the North Maine Woods Inc., because fewer visitors would come through to support the wilderness land base.

The up-and-coming niches, namely agritourism, don’t have the necessary support. Agritourism advocates, who were quite vocal at the 2003 Blaine House conference, worry the state is losing open space, small family farms and rural communities to development. To stay alive economically, farmers are willing to open their barn doors to let people see inside and advocate for more professional-level agricultural 4-H fairs and open-farm days as events. A Turner farmer sees approximately 7,000 visitors on the annual Open Farm Day. “Farms have a chance to open their doors and say, ‘Please come see what we are doing,’” said Gloria Varney, co-owner of Nezinscot Farm in Turner. Interest in all things agriculture, however, might not exist on the average day for the average tourist. Farmers have attempted to schedule farm tours with no luck. Harry Ricke, with the Maine State Pomological Society, spent \$200,000 on a new farm tourism center, including a gift shop and cranberry packing area, in Turner, which is the largest agricultural-producing town in the state. The 2002 facility didn’t get one tour operator its first year despite six scheduled tours.

- **Cooperation threats:** Many feel tourism's greatest risk is the inability of natural resource industries to work together. The 2003 Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource Industries brought five industries to one table to discuss how to share one landscape. Agricultural operations, for instance, fear disease transmission through multi-use trails running from one farm to another. ATVs, which can be a vehicle to spread disease, can also tear up stream crossings in agricultural grasslands. Additional examples prove interagency conflicts. Hunting, a focus of IF&W, takes a toll on tourism's wildlife watching efforts. Visitors repeatedly ask, "Where can I see a moose?" and the answer might be nowhere. A inn owner in Grand Lake Stream only saw one moose in a given summer due to the depressed species population. During the fall, moose are seen by tourists strapped to the back of a hunter's pick-up truck. Conflicts stem often from a lack of dialogue, and unless Maine better understands its niches and tries to serve their needs, no one will get ahead.

Another tourism threat is the internal conflict, referring to how one tourism niche can affect another tourism niche. Kayaks and windjammers don't always mix well, for instance. Huge numbers of kayaks can be in the water at one time, leading to safety concerns especially for those who go without a guide. Windjammer captains admit accidentally hitting kayakers who approach them. "They want to go out and paddle by the big boat," said Kip Files, owner of the Victory Chimes schooner out of Rockland. "Even if you blew your signal, they'll just wave at you. I'd love to see anyone on the water have a safety course of rules of the water and put a safety jacket on, but how do you enforce this?" Hikers and snowmobilers can conflict, too. The North Maine Woods Inc. finds a difference between motorized and non-motorized recreationists. The non-profit, which charges people a daily fee to visit multi-use land, tries but can not satisfy everyone's landscape preferences. "The area is working forest, and there are logging operations," said Albro Cowperthwaite, director of the North Maine Woods Inc. "Ecotourists might prefer not to see trees cut down." No matter what is done, some recreationists can appear uneasy in a multi-use forest.

Within one tourism niche, pressures can exist where not all members agree. Individual guides find that no one group speaks for all of them. Maine Audubon and the Natural Resources Council of Maine represent non-motorized users unlike the more diverse Maine Professional Guides Association. A recent guiding seminar highlighted the difference between the organizations. Several years ago, the Natural

Resources Council put on a Maine Guide Rendezvous to educate guides on conservation issues. Some hunters did not attend, McEvoy said, because the event never gained the support of the Maine Professional Guides Association.

- **Ecological threats:** Certain Maine recreational habits have become more damaging to the natural resources. A change in lifestyle from non-motorized to motorized recreational vehicles leads the ecological threat that's tearing the tourism landscape apart. The trend has produced lazy recreationists who lack stewardship ethics as they navigate through the forests and streams. A large number of people coming in from southern New England, some fisherman and hunters, will go to great efforts to avoid walking. The use of machines can be especially harmful in the spring when the roads are thawing out. "A generation is hooked on mechanized recreation from inline skates to ATVs," said Dave Field, Ph. D., chair of the University of Maine's Department of Forest Management. "This is a negative. The population is a bunch of slobs who litter and vandalize." Motorized recreationists challenge land managers.

One of the greatest ecological threats is the ATV, which runs amok. ATV use has severely upset the balance, and no one is as upset about ATVers as snowmobilers, who now face access repercussions despite their one-time healthy relationship fostered over 30 years. ATVs will go anywhere creating illegal trails in the tourism landscape. "An ATV and chainsaw can get you almost anywhere in Maine – and will eventually do so through an increasing sprawl of unofficial trails – if not controlled," said Lee Sochasky, executive director of the St. Croix International Waterway Commission in Calais. "This is a tourism issue. A growing number of ATVers are coming from out of state to enjoy Maine's woods, beaches and streams from the top of their machines." Weak ATV management by short-staffed wardens has allowed the niche to run, literally, out of control. With no enforcement, areas become overwhelmed with ATVers. "The wardens told me that they do not enforce ATVs because they don't have time," McEvoy said. "Because I'm surrounded by pavement on three sides, then I've got people flying around. I've got ATVs bombing by and, this has a negative experience (for my guests)." Outcomes include increased enforcement or restrictive options, such as posting "private property" signs or outright bans. Small lot owners, especially in the Southern Maine, are posting their land in response to ATVs even though they have faced other inconveniences like trash dumping or hunting access. "ATVs have intruded on every backcountry pond and

fishing hole that there was,” said Larry Warren, president of the Western Mountains Foundation that plans to build a 180-mile trail. Some anti-ATV tourism stakeholders call for a possible ban throughout the state, so public access to private land will not be threatened. If lands were closed to all users, due to ATVs, this would negate the benefit of the limited landowner liability law. Bans are not unheard of; however, the state already has banned personal watercraft on many of the backcountry ponds and lakes in western Maine.

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Elizabeth Munding was born in Tulsa, Okla., on June 17, 1967. She graduated from Bettendorf High School in Iowa in 1985 and the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1989 with a bachelor of arts in print journalism, a bachelor of arts in Spanish and a minor in women's studies. After her undergraduate studies, she worked as a professional journalist for more than 11 years as a features editor at three Gannett newspapers – *The Tennessean* in Nashville, Tenn.; *The Clarksville Leaf-Chronicle* in Clarksville; Tenn.; and *The Burlington Free Press* in Burlington, Vt. While at the University of Maine-Orono pursuing a masters in Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Elizabeth worked as a graduate teaching assistant and enhanced her studies with outside ecology-related opportunities. One summer, she served as a Project Puffin volunteer stationed on Matinicus Rock more than 20 miles out at sea. She also worked as an interpretive park ranger for two seasons at Acadia National Park in Bar Harbor, Maine and plans to work for Sequoia National Park this summer. Elizabeth is a member of several professional organizations, including Phi Kappa Phi national honors society; the National Association for Interpretation and The International Ecotourism Society. She is an NAI certified interpretive guide and has passed several National Park Service Interpretive Development Program modules. Elizabeth is a candidate for the Master of Science degree in Forestry with an emphasis in Parks, Recreation and Tourism from The University of Maine in May 2006.