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HCPC NEWSLETTER

Hancock County Planning Commission

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HCPC Executive Board Fiscal Year 2008-2009

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PLANNING BOARD NEWS

By Tom Martin

Flood Plain Maps Going Digital Only

(Article adapted from FEMA newsletter)

Since the 1970's, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) has provided flood hazard maps and reports to help more than 20,000 participating communities manage and reduce risks. FEMA currently distributes both paper and digital flood hazard maps and reports. HCPC has kept a file of hard copy maps.

Beginning on October 1, 2009, customers may order only digital flood hazard maps and reports. FEMA's Map Service Center (MSC) will not produce or distribute paper Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), Flood Hazard Boundary Maps (FHBMs), or Flood Insurance Study (FIS) reports on or after this date, other than a single paper copy provided to communities when their maps are updated. Users of paper maps should start planning to make a transition to digital flood hazard maps and reports now. If you use paper maps now, FIRM Scans and FIRMettes are the simplest way to use digital maps

The simplest digital maps to use are digital pictures of FEMA's paper maps. FEMA's entire map inventory, both current and historical maps, is available. A FIRM scan is a picture of a whole map. FIRM scans are available by download and on CDs and DVDs. Because a FIRM scan is a picture of a

whole map sheet, you need a specialized large-format printer to create a paper copy. For those who print on smaller paper sizes, FEMA provides tools that allow users to create an individualized flood map called a "FIRMette." FIRMettes are portions of FIRM scan images formatted to fit on printers commonly found in offices. You can make FIRMettes of any map in the FEMA inventory online using the *FIRMette – Web* tool. For those who prefer to work offline, FEMA also provides a *FIRMette – Desktop* tool that makes FIRMettes from FIRM scan data that you have copied to your computer.

See the MSC web site at <http://msc.fema.gov> to access the FIRM scan data, FIRMette tools, and related instructions. HCPC will keep the links updated on its web site: <http://www.hcpcme.org/landuse.html> Contact Tom Martin for more information.

As with paper flood hazard maps, remember to check for Letters of Map Change (LOMCs) that provide updates to the FIRM scans and FIRMettes. These are listed in the MSC catalog for each FIRM scan. In addition to FIRM scans and FIRMettes, FEMA provides map data and tools with which users experienced with computer mapping systems can create custom maps or use with their own map data. These range from online map viewers that will be familiar to those who use Internet mapping sites to data and services used with specialized Geographic Information System (GIS) software. These products provide flexibility and support sophisticated uses. See the MSC web site at <http://msc.fema.gov> for more information.

SHORELAND ZONING NEWS

As most planning boards know, municipal shoreland zoning ordinances must be updated to reflect the DEP guidelines by July 1, 2009. If your town needs to extend Resource Protection zoning adjacent to freshwater wetlands based on their rating as moderate and high value waterfowl habitat, remember to follow landowner notification requirements. State law (38 MRSA section 438-A (1-B) requires that written notification to landowners whose property is proposed for placement in a Resource Protection District. Notice must be sent no later than 14 days before the planning board votes to hold a public hearing on the

proposed amendments that would place new properties in Resource Protection. Feel free to contact Tom Martin if you have any questions or visit our website to review the standards.

www.hcpcme.org/landuse.html

HCPC UNDERTAKES COASTAL SCENIC VIEW INVENTORY

Our scenic views are one of the major assets that contribute to the high quality of life we experience in Hancock County. However, there has never been a complete inventory of the scenic views in our region. Working with the State Planning Office, the Washington County Council of Governments, consultants and the University of Maine-Machias, we will be undertaking an inventory of views from public places. *This inventory will not involve views from private property.* This inventory will be useful to towns as they update their comprehensive plans, work on scenic byway grants and other funding applications. It will also be useful to groups such as chambers of commerce that are preparing promotional brochures.

HCPC will organize groups of volunteers in all parts of coastal Hancock County to prepare an inventory of view. These volunteers will undergo training and be assisted by college interns. The information collected will be assembled into an electronic data base that contains digital photographs and maps. An electronic library of photographs, maps and other information will be available for use by towns and other groups. A hard copy report will also be produced.

We hope to involve all coastal towns in this project. We will be contacting municipal officials, land trusts and business groups. This is an opportunity to become involved in identifying key scenic resources in our region. For more information contact Tom Martin or Jim Fisher.

Visit our website to learn more about our work on this initiative.

www.hcpcme.org/environment/view

BROWNFIELDS NEWS

by Tom Martin

IS THERE A POTENTIAL BROWNFIELDS SITE IN YOUR TOWN?

The HCPC Brownfields Steering Committee has established preliminary site selection criteria for initial investigation of brownfields sites. These criteria include:

- a. extent of actual/perceived threat to adjoining properties;
- b. creation of public access and green space;
- c. compatibility with adopted comprehensive plans;
- d. condition of existing structures and utilities;
- e. threat to human health and the environment;
- f. proximity to downtown areas and/or major transportation facilities;
- g. estimated potential to redevelop in this grant cycle;
- h. developer currently interested in participating;
- i. reuse potential;
- j. lack of alternative methods to clean-up site;
- k. potential resources committed or available to aid redevelopment;
- l. geographic distribution across the county; and
- m. extent of municipal support.

While these criteria are not firm, they will be used to select sites. If you believe there are any qualifying sites in your town, even if they may not meet all the criteria, please contact Tom Martin at the HCPC. We can arrange for a preliminary site visit by someone from DEP. There will be an in-depth discussion of brownfields at the March 31, 2009 workshop (see article below). We urge all towns to send someone to this meeting.

To learn more about our work on brownfields, please visit our website

www.hcpcme.org/environment/brownfields

HCPC Holds Brownfields Workshop on the Evening of March 31

We invite you to attend the workshop on March 31, 2009 from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM at the Ellsworth city hall auditorium. Please note that there is no fee for this workshop and no meal will be provided. We do ask for pre-registration by March 26, 2009.

AGENDA

6:30 – 6:40 PM: Welcome and Introduction:
Tom Martin, Hancock County Planning Commission

6:40 – 7:10 PM: Brownfields: What Are They? *Nick Hodgkins, Maine DEP & Glenn Daukas, Campbell Environmental*

7:10 – 7:30 PM: Hancock County Planning Commission Brownfields Assessment Grant: What it is and What it Isn't. *Tom Martin and Glenn Daukas*

7:30 – 8:00 PM: How Do We Identify Sites?
Nick Hodgkins, Glenn Daukas and Tom Martin

8:00 – 8:30 PM: Brainstorming Session on Preliminary Site Identification

GIS NEWS

by Jim Fisher

Castine Historic GIS: A Virtual Walk around the Village

In 2008 the Hancock County Planning Commission expanded our multimedia repertoire working with the town of Castine on historical asset mapping. The project culminated in a combination of historic inventory data, GIS mapping and an online interactive mapping element that permits users to learn more about Castine's most significant historic buildings. Google maps provided a convenient tool to display our information online with street maps and aerial photographs. This winter they further enhanced our inventory by adding video of our

historic tour. You can not only identify historic structures and list detailed information using our database, but you can now take a virtual walk down the historic streets of Castine, looking left and right as you go. Just visit www.hcpcme.org/castine to get started.

This multimedia strategy for creating, storing and presenting scenic and historic information is a prototype for our two-county scenic inventory project described in this newsletter on page 2. Contact HCPC if you are interested in using these emerging technologies to identify important community assets, provide public outreach and generate local collaborations in resource conservation.

GRANT NEWS

by Tom Martin

Stimulus Package

As we go to press, news of the how the federal stimulus package will affect Maine is still being determined. The goal is to have 50 percent of funds spent on projects that can be initiated within 120 days of enactment of the stimulus legislation. We will keep towns posted as we learn more about the funding amounts and program requirements. While there are many components of the package, here are some highlights that will affect municipalities:

1. USDA: Community Facility loans and grants. This program has been popular for funding facilities such as fire stations and community buildings. This may be the time for towns to seek low interest loans for these facilities that most towns are unable to fund through the Community Development Block Grant program.
2. USDA Water and Waste Water: Additional funds are also targeted at water and waste water system improvements.
3. USDA Broadband Internet Service: Funding is available for broadband service in rural areas. The HCPC executive board and staff are following potential funding sources for broadband service very closely. We believe that inadequate broadband service is one of the

major inhibitors to economic development in our region. Effective service is essential to the functioning of both home-based businesses and commercial and industrial enterprises.

4. Department of Home Security-Federal Emergency Management Agency: Firefighter Assistance grants for modifying, upgrading or constructing fire stations.
5. Community Development Block Grants: additional funds will be allocated through the existing funding formula. Here again, priority will be given to projects that can be initiated within 120 days. Rather than initiate a new round of funding, present plans are to fund more projects from the current round of applicants. *This means that if you have already submitted an application, you have a greater chance of being funded.* HCPC is available to assist towns with CDBG applications and provide general information on various CDBG funding categories. Follow the HCPC website: <http://www.hcpcme.org/comdev.html> for the latest news or contact Tom Martin.

Shore and Harbor Technical Assistance Grants

The Maine Coastal Program announces the availability of funds for Shore and Harbor Planning grants. Shore and Harbor Technical Assistance Grants are meant to promote sound waterfront planning, harbor management, and balanced development of shore and harbor areas to improve marine infrastructure and assure access to the shore. Funds may be used for harbor planning, including harbor management plans, ordinances, and mooring plans; as well as, planning studies for public and working access, planning and designing of harbor improvements, developing management plans for municipal facilities in harbors and waterfronts that border upon and may include state-owned submerged lands.

Eligibility

Shore and harbor grants are available to municipalities in the State's designated coastal zone,

which includes all towns with tidal waters, to the head of tide on tidal rivers. Funds will be awarded on a competitive basis, based on the results of a project scoring and selection process. Grants are intended to be issued to municipalities, but other entities and organizations may participate through a partnership with a lead municipality.

Grant Requirements and Conditions

A match, in cash or in-kind, of 25% of total project cost is required. Projects showing a substantial additional municipal share will improve the competitiveness of the project proposal. The project match can include direct project cost and documented values of in-kind services, including expenditures for the development and preparation of the grant application.

Grant size - Individual grants may not exceed \$20,000.

Typical Planning Activities (eligible projects)

The scope of eligible projects is fairly broadly defined. The following is meant to provide some guidance of the type and scope of eligible projects. Shore and harbor grants are meant to support planning activities that compliment or lead to concrete actions, harbor improvements, and management activities in harbor or shorefront areas. These funds may not be used for capital improvements, or on-going staff activities.

Project planners are encouraged to consider projects that contribute to multi-town or regional planning and resource management efforts such as addressing shared bay-wide harbor management and use issues, tackling regional comprehensive planning efforts, enhancing efforts to acquire and/or secure public recreational and working access to tidal waters, supporting marine resource management activities, advancing strategic land conservation planning efforts, and contributing to waterfront develop efforts for public access and sustainable eco-tourism.

Harbor Planning (especially to implement recommendations in consistent comprehensive plans), including:

Development of Harbor Management Plans

Creation of Harbor Ordinances

Preparation of Mooring Plans with attendant data bases and mapping support, Data collection, mapping, data base development, and analysis activities needed to support harbor planning activities, Harbor traffic control and safety planning.

Planning Studies to establish Public and Working Access to Tidal Waters

Analysis of local and regional public access needs
Open space, recreational and conservation plans (as part of a land conservation/access initiative)
Inventory of water access sites and facilities, and development plans
Waterfront development planning and management studies

Planning and Design Projects for Harbor Improvements

Planning that integrates public access with waterfront development to preserve unique natural, cultural, and village assets that contributes to sustainable development and eco-tourism infrastructure.

Planning and design of facilities and improvements for public and working access,

Dredging studies (non-federal, and for federal match),

Support for research and demonstration of new materials and techniques for ramps, piers and wharfs, floats, and moorings.

Municipal Facilities Management Plans

Management and business plans for operations of municipal fishing piers, marinas, and water access sites and facilities

Development of related rules and ordinances

Creation of model or standardized lease arrangements for municipal use.

Working Waterfront Planning and Improvement Projects

Project planning and development support for projects seeking funding from the Working Waterfront Access Protection Program.

Grant Application Deadline

Grant applications are due by the close of business on **Monday, April 6, 2009**. Project proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a review committee. Final project selection and amount of grant award will be made by the State Planning Office, Maine Coastal Program. For questions and additional information please contact Jim Connors, Maine Coastal Program. Tel. #287-8938, Email jim.connors@maine.gov

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands Offers Recreational Trails Grants

The Maine BP&L is requesting proposals for recreational trails for 2010. Trails grants pay up to 80% of the cost for motorized, non-motorized and multi-use trails devoted to recreational uses. Municipalities and non-profit organizations may apply. Funds may be used to acquire right-of-way, construct new trails and improve existing trails. The deadline for completed proposals is November 6, 2009, but pre-application site visit documentation is required no later than August 14, 2009. The sooner you get started, the better. Details are available online at

www.maine.gov/doc/parks/programs/community/trail_smanual.html. Contact Jim Fisher HCPC for additional information and assistance.

FY 2010 Grants for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Projects

Maine DEP plans to issue a Request For Proposals for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Projects in April 2009. NPS Projects help restore or protect lakes, streams, or coastal waters that are polluted or considered threatened. DEP anticipates issuing grants for NPS Projects with FY 2010 monies provided to Maine by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Section 319(h) of the Federal Clean Water Act. Maine public organizations such as state agencies, soil and water conservation districts, regional planning agencies, watershed districts,

municipalities, and nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations are eligible recipients.

Two types of projects will be invited: NPS Watershed Projects and NPS Watershed Surveys. DEP plans to devote about 80% of the funds for NPS Watershed Projects. A NPS Watershed Project focuses on implementing actions within a watershed to improve or protect a waterbody. Projects need to be designed to implement conservation practices in the watershed to help achieve a significant reduction in NPS pollutant load to a waterbody. A portion of funds will be allocated for projects to help restore primarily NPS impaired waters.

There is considerable opportunity to obtain a NPS grant help restore or protect lakes, streams, or coastal waters that are polluted or considered threatened. Under last years RFP issued in April 2008, DEP received 23 proposals. This spring, DEP will award about \$501,000 for 10 projects that will continue or start NPS Watershed Projects.

The RFP will be posted at <http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/docgrant/319.htm>
FMI contact: Norm Marcotte, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Watershed Management, 17 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333, norm.g.marcotte@maine.gov or 207-287-7727

TRANSPORTATION NEWS

by Jim Fisher

Downeast Sunrise Trail Opens for Winter Use



On January 31, 2009 the first section of the Down East Sunrise Trail was inaugurated at the eastern Gateway in Ayers Junction. The Down East Sunrise Trail is a rail corridor preservation program that entails removing obsolete ties and tracks, rebuilding the surface and establishing the corridor between Ellsworth and Ayers Junction as a multi-use trail until such time as the tracks can be re-established.

The trail opened for winter use between Whitneyville and Ayers Junction, representing about 30 miles of trail in Washington County.

Though the trail will be closed again with the spring thaw, segments will be re-



opened as construction is completed. Track removal will also resume in the spring and is expected to reach the western gateway in Hancock or Ellsworth by the end of 2009. The entire 82-mile trail may open as early as this autumn.

With our second very snowy winter, trail use has started with great enthusiasm. You can see a video of the trail ribbon cutting, thousands of photographs taken of the full length and learn more about this corridor preservation program at www.sunrisetrail.org. For more information, contact Jim Fisher (jfisher@hpcme.org).



Extension Plans Proposed for the Blackwoods Scenic Byway

The Blackwoods Scenic Byway was designated in 1971 as one of Maine's first State Scenic Byways. At the time the state considered the core of the byway to be the relatively remote section of Route 182 beginning at the town line between Franklin and Township 9 and about mid-way through Cherryfield. When HCPC prepared this byway's first corridor management plan, community representatives noted that the byway takes on historic, cultural and economic significance when the towns of Franklin and Cherryfield are fully included.

Beginning in the west, the scenic views from Franklin across Taunton Bay to Schoodic Mountain are unparalleled. The historic village center is soon to become a cross roads for travelers along the Down East Sunrise Trail, creating new opportunities for restaurants, lodging and other businesses. For byway travelers, this will be a chance to unload the bicycles or cross country skis and spend some time exploring the far side of Donnell Pond and Tunk Lake. Beginning in the east, the village center of Cherryfield presents another great bookend to the experience, with historic homes, the Narraguagus River and two more intersections with the Downeast Sunrise Trail. Both towns offer picnic facilities and other tourist amenities that are not found along the trail in the townships.

The proposed extension in Cherryfield was ratified by the select board. Franklin will be considering the extension in the 2009 town meeting. HCPC has recently proposed an additional \$100,000+ for byway support that, if received, will help to promote and preserve this remarkable region. Officially including these historic towns will be a big boost for the towns and the byway. More information is available online at www.blackwoodsbyway.org.

See map on back cover

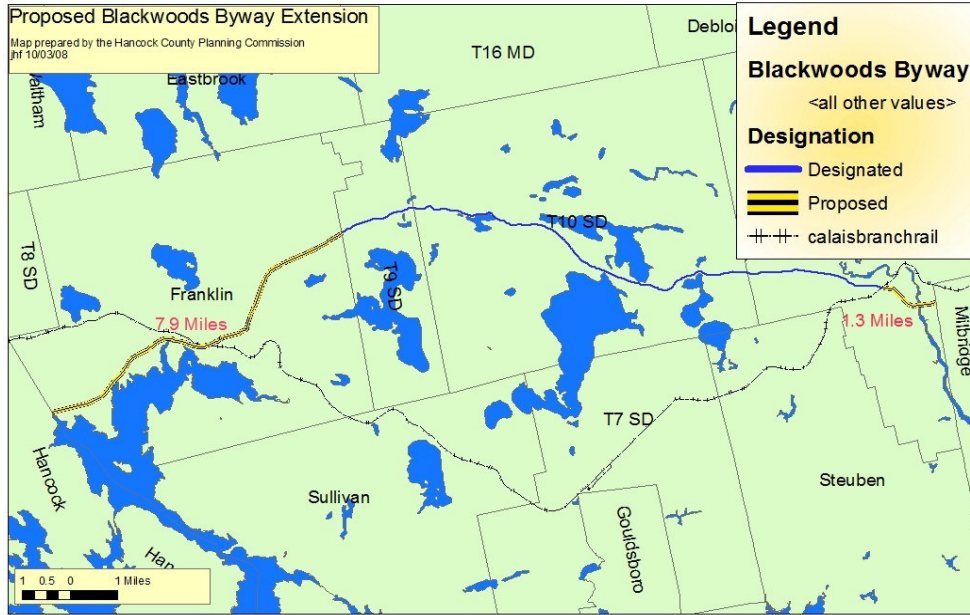
DATES TO REMEMBER

Brownfields Workshop
Tuesday, March 31st
Upper Level Meeting Room
Ellsworth City Hall
6:30 – 8:30 PM

Register by March 26th by calling Sheri Walsh at 667-7131 or by email at hcpc@hpcme.org

HCPC Annual Meeting
Tuesday, May 26th
Ellsworth Library Meeting Room
7:00 – 9:00 PM
Guest Speaker – George Lapointe, Commissioner
Maine Department of Marine Resources
Topic: Marine Resource Issues Facing Hancock County

There is no fee for this workshop and no meal will be provided



March

Hancock County Planning Commission is a partner with local and county government to: protect our heritage and resources, plan for the future and promote a sound economy for the people of Hancock County.

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