

# Grindstone Scenic Byway

## Corridor Partnership Plan **DRAFT 3/29/12**

The following text is pulled from the working CPP website. Although the Corridor Advocacy group did adopt this plan in principle in its meeting of November, 30, 2011, this plan should still be considered a draft until it is released for public review.

### Overview

The Grindstone Scenic Byway takes a visitor through some of the most spectacular natural landscape that inland Maine has to offer. Dominating that landscape is Katahdin, Maine's tallest mountain. Katahdin marks the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail, a 2,184 mile footpath originating at Springer Mountain in Georgia. Katahdin forms what might be called the centerpiece of Baxter State Park, Maine's largest publically owned land holding, and one which, by covenant, protects forever the wilderness values of Katahdin and its surrounding forests and waters. Running through forested landscape at the base of Katahdin (though outside the Park), travelers encounter the two major (East and West) branches of Maine's mightiest river, the Penobscot. The Penobscot watershed drains over 1/4 of Maine's land area, a drainage area the size of the entire state of Massachusetts.

The Grindstone Scenic Byway runs both north and south from points of origination along Interstate 95, one in the town of Medway (convergence of the East and West Branches of the Penobscot) and the other in the town of Sherman, gateway to the agricultural lands of southern Aroostook County. The more northerly leg reaches through Patten and on to Shin Pond and Grand Lake Matagamon, offering travelers magnificent views of Katahdin to the west and, further on, access to recreational opportunities associated with a number of remote rivers, lakes, and streams. This leg ends at Baxter State Park's north gate. The more southerly leg passes through the industrial towns of East Millinocket and Millinocket before heading north and west to "the Lake" (convergence of Ambejejus Lake and Millinocket Lake), a jumping off point for West Branch fishing (world class cold water) and white water rafting. This leg of the Byway ends at Baxter State Park's south gate.

While acknowledging the great significance of the Grindstone Scenic Byway's natural, scenic, and recreational qualities, all of which are considered to be extremely high by state and even national standards, the Byway planning group was also struck by the historical and cultural qualities of area through which the Byway passes. The history of Indian occupation of and travel through this land, sometimes known through legend, sometimes through archeological evidence, tells of thousands of years of seasonal migrations along great river highways. Place names throughout the area (Katahdin, Matagamon, Ambejejus) reflect Indian presence, and Katahdin itself still holds great spiritual meaning for Wabanaki people. Later Euro-American incursions in the area contributed a history of exploration and timber harvesting, lumber camps and river

driving, sport fishing and “rustication.” The building of Millinocket, the “Magic City,” was legendary in its own time, drawing spectators from all over to witness a new metropolis rising out of the wilderness. It was perhaps Henry David Thoreau and “Maine Woods” chronicles that best captured and then projected the character of the place, impressing readers around the world with its wild and inspirational expanse.

Maine’s tallest mountain, Maine’s mightiest river, Maine’s greatest park, and the stories that permeate every square mile of forest and every running foot of surging whitewater – these are the elements that make up the Grindstone Scenic Byway experience. Our challenge, as Byway planners and organizers, is simply to make that experience more accessible, more understandable, more active for Byway travelers, so that they themselves can know the trill of walking in Thoreau’s footsteps, paddling in the wake of a Wabanaki guide, eating bean hole beans in the fashion of a long ago river driver – and can then tell their friends and neighbors what an amazing experience it is.

This Grindstone Scenic Byway Corridor Partnership Plan provides a framework for doing just that – creating a truly world class visitor experience in the greater Katahdin area. The plan describes the extraordinary qualities of the area (natural, scenic, recreational, historical, cultural, archeological). It identifies opportunities for resource conservation and enhancement, describes groups of travelers who might be interested in traveling here, and it argues for investment in infrastructure and services required to support these travelers in their explorations. The plan even lays out approaches to “getting the word out,” making this place and the high quality services and activities available here more broadly known. We think of the plan as a blueprint for development of the Byway and for strengthening tourism in the greater Katahdin area as a whole.

We finally note that the plan is referred to as a “Partnership Plan,” and that is for a reason. Once the planning group had settled on tourism development as a core goal for the Byway project, we began to look at all of the various elements and conditions that would have an impact on the quality of the Byway traveler’s experience. We determined that only through a concerted, coordinated, inspired effort across multiple sectors, all focused on generating a high quality experience for the Byway traveler, could we, would we succeed. And hence a proposal for establishing a new “network” of interests – the new “Katahdin Tourism Partnership.”

## **Process/Groups**

Planning for the Grindstone Scenic Byway project has been underway for some time, although the Corridor Advocacy Group began its formal meetings in early 2011.

### **Planning Team**

The Planning Team initiated the planning process, gathering information about intrinsic qualities, doing outreach to stakeholders, organizing the Corridor Advocacy Group (of CAG, see below), facilitating CAG meetings, and writing the plan.

- John Noll, Eastern Maine Development Corporation
- Fred Michaud, Maine Department of Transportation
- Bruce Hazard, PlaceWorks Consulting

### **Corridor Advocacy Group**

The Corridor Advocacy Group has guided the planning process, establishing basic purpose and values, providing substantive information about area sites and resources, selecting themes and high priority projects.

Members of the CAG include:

- Jean Boddy - Katahdin Area Chamber of Commerce, Millinocket
- Rhonda Brophy - Patten Lumbermen's Museum, Patten
- John Chartier - Mountain Glory Farm, Patten
- Frank Clukey - Director of East Millinocket, Millinocket, & Medway Recreation, Millinocket
- Laurie Cormier - Big Moose Inn, Millinocket
- Galen Hale - MDOT Regional Program Region 5, Presque Isle
- Terry Hill - Shin Pond Village, Mt. Chase
- Jean Hoekwater and/ or Christine Theriault - Baxter State Park Authority, Millinocket
- Sarah Hunt - NEOC, Millinocket
- Mark Leathers - James W. Sewall Company/Elliotsville Plantation, Inc.
- Kathy Lee - Town of Medway, Medway
- Jeff Long - Pine Grove Campground, East Millinocket
- Mark Marston - Town of East Millinocket, East Millinocket
- Tony Moscone - Dean A. Beaupain Law Office, Millinocket
- Jeff Packard - Upper Valley Economic Corp, Sherman
- Peter Qualey - Sherman
- Mike and Jane Ricci - Gardiner Farms, Staceyville
- Steve Stanley - Penobscot County Commissioner, Bangor
- Lelah S. Villalpando - Millinocket

### **Stakeholder Group**

The Stakeholder Group includes all landowners, government officials, business people, and interested individuals who were consulted in the process of developing the Corridor Partnership Plan.

## **Process/Meetings**

1/27/2011 - Stakeholders meeting. Sherman Municipal Building, Sherman. Overview of Scenic Byways Program. Planning process. Discussion of general purpose. Key sites of interest. Solicited participation on Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG)

3/8/2011 - Corridor Advocacy Group. Baxter State Park Headquarters, Millinocket. Reviewed planning process. Established meeting schedule. Set goals. Stimulating local economy through tourism development. Reviewed Intrinsic Qualities categories.

4/12/2011 - Corridor Advocacy Group. Patten Lumberman's Museum, Patten. Reviewed tourism market information. **Identified "touring" and "recreational" visitors as key targets.** Natural qualities assessment. **Natural qualities tentative lead category.**

5/10/2011 - Corridor Advocacy Group. Baxter State Park Headquarters, Millinocket. Reviewed CAG responsibilities and set membership. Reviewed potential themes, **chose "journey through nature."** Reviewed site evaluation process, categories of funding, potential projects.

6/14/2011 - Corridor Advocacy Group. Sherman Municipal Building, Sherman. Discussion of theme and implications of name. **Developed "structure" of Byway,** including gateways and destination points, high quality view points. Priorities for projects. Discussion of national designation. Organizational structure. Bus tour proposed.

*Planning team evaluates key sites.*

8/23/2011 - Corridor Advocacy Group. Baxter State Park Headquarters, Millinocket. Revision of meeting schedule to include bus tour. **Review and approval of strategies.** Organizational structure. Discussion of proposed visitors center in Medway.

9/12/2011 - Stakeholder Group – Bus Tour. Presentations on each segment, potential improvements, issues for landowners, marketing opportunities.

9/29/2011 - Corridor Advocacy Group. Patten Lumberman's Museum, Patten. Bus tour debrief with emphasis on keeping communications going across geographic and political lines. **High priority projects identified** within each strategy area. **Principles for establishing Byway organization.**

*Planning team drafts plan.*

11/30/2011 - Corridor Advocacy Group. Baxter State Park Headquarters, Millinocket. To **review proposed plan,** suggest changes.

12/13/2011 - Stakeholder Group and General Public. Pelletiers', Millinocket. **Public hearing on plan** – two weeks for comment, then final vote (online) for CAG to **approve plan.**

# Purpose

## Federal Level

The mission of the National Scenic Byways Program is to create unique travel experiences and enhance local quality of life through efforts to preserve, protect, interpret, and promote the intrinsic qualities of designated byways.

## State Level

The Maine Scenic Byways Program focuses on community-based support and resource protection while seeking to promote regional economic benefits that may result from designation. The ultimate goal of the Program is to preserve, maintain, protect and enhance Maine's unique intrinsic resources.

## Local Level

The Grindstone Corridor Advocacy Group has **identified stimulation of local economies through tourism development** as the primary purpose for this Byway project.

CAG members have also made it clear that they see tourism as only one aspect of the regional economy, and that we should undertake tourism development in a manner that does not diminish the region's ability to derive economic value from the natural landscape in other ways, specifically through timber harvesting.

# Intrinsic Qualities

The National Scenic Byways Program defines "intrinsic qualities" as "features that are considered representative, unique, irreplaceable, or distinctly characteristic of an area."

*Intrinsic qualities arise from a particular combination of resources along a byway that together define its character, interest and appeal. These resources are the special views, places, buildings, sites, and other features that residents enjoy and that provide the byway's drawing power and interest for travelers.*

FHWA recognizes six intrinsic quality categories: natural, scenic, recreational, archeological, cultural, and historical. For each Intrinsic Quality category, this plan lays out:

- Definition (as provided by FHWA)
- Description, Significance, Condition, Trends (an attempt to determine the quality of the resources in this category as found in or along the corridor)
- Issues (potential challenges or questions that relate to the future quality of these resources as these may or may not impact the visitor experience)

- Relevant Projects/Initiatives (actions already underway or being planned that could have an effect on the quality of resources in this category in the future)

## Natural

### Definition

*Natural quality applies to those features in the visual environment that are in a relatively undisturbed state. These features predate the arrival of human populations and may include geological formations, fossils, landform, water bodies, vegetation, and wildlife. There may be evidence of human activity, but the natural features reveal minimal disturbances. (FHWA Interim Policy, May 18, 1995)*

### Description, Significance, Condition, Trends

The Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) has identified natural qualities as the resource category of highest significance for this corridor. The natural qualities of the Katahdin area do define, to a large extent, the visitor experience as well as contributing to the quality of life enjoyed by residents of the area. Key resource groups include geology, hydrology, flora and fauna.

Geological qualities. The geological feature that dominates the Katahdin area is Katahdin itself. Marking the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail, at 5267 feet, Katahdin is Maine's tallest mountain.

AMC's Maine Mountain Guide describes Katahdin as follows:

*Katahdin, an irregularly shaped mountain mass, rises abruptly from comparatively flat country to a gentle sloping plateau above treeline. It culminates on its southeastern margin in an irregular series of low summits, of which the southern two are the highest. The peaks are 0.3 miles apart, and Baxter Peak (5267 ft.) to the northwest is the higher of the two. From the southeastern South Peak (5240 ft.), a long, curved, serrated ridge of vertically fractured granite, known as the Knife Edge, hooks away to the east and northeast. About 0.47 miles from South Peak, this ridge ends in a rock pyramid called Chimney Peak. Immediately beyond Chimney Peak, and separated from it by a sharp cleft, is a broader rock peak, Pamola (4919 ft.), named for the Indian avenging spirit of the mountain. To the north, the broad rock mass of Hamlin Peak (4756 ft.) dominates the plateau or tableland, which ends in the series of low North (Howe) Peaks (4750-4612 ft.).*

Mountains south and west of Katahdin include the Brothers, Mount Coe, Barren, the Owl. To the north and west lie Traveler, the Turners, Sugarloaf, and Mount Chase (among many others).

Hydrological qualities. Significant hydrological features in the Katahdin area include streams, rivers, and lakes that make up the upper Penobscot River system. (The Penobscot River basin as a whole, draining an area of approximately 8,750 square miles,

is the largest river basin lying wholly within the State of Maine.) Although many branches and the main stem water flows have been altered over time to support the movement of long logs and pulp from forestlands in the upper reaches to mills below, for the most part waterways retain their original natural character. Some, the East Branch and its tributaries for example, are in the pristine condition they have enjoyed since the last glacier receded from the landscape as much as 12,000 years ago.

The [Maine Rivers Study](#) undertaken in 1982 by the Maine Department of Conservation working in collaboration with the United States Department of the Interior found as follows:

For the East Branch of the Penobscot River:

- One of the greatest concentrations of geologic and hydrologic features in the state.
- Historic habitat for Pale Green Orchid, Auricled Twayblade, and other rare or endangered species.
- Farthest inland fishable population of Atlantic Salmon.

For the West Branch of the Penobscot River:

- Highest variety of geologic, geomorphic, and hydrologic features in the state.
- Important nesting and wintering areas for bald eagles.
- One of the state's highest quality fishery resources.

Several tributaries, including all tributaries within Baxter State Park and a number of East Branch tributaries outside the park, achieve highest classification (AA) under Maine's Department of Environmental Protection River Classification system. With respect to AA tributaries: "The habitat is characterized as free flowing and natural. The aquatic life, bacteria, and dissolved oxygen content are as naturally occurs."

The [Maine's Finest Lakes Study](#) prepared for the Maine Critical Areas Program in 1989 assigned "outstanding" or "significant" ratings to natural features associated with lakes in the Katahdin area, including: Katahdin Lake ("outstanding shore character"), Grand Lake Matagamom ("outstanding wildlife and botanic resources"), Millinocket Lake ("outstanding wildlife resources"), and the Debsconeags.

Flora and fauna. The Katahdin area is heavily forested, mixed hardwood and softwood (spruce and fir), with dominant species relating to elevation, soils, hydrology. Portions of the area have been harvested multiple times over two centuries. That said, natural regeneration continues to return these lands to their forested state through a somewhat predictable natural succession of species being re-established following harvesting cycles. In these respects as in most others, the areas forest lands share the characteristics generally found in Maine's "north woods."

The [Maine State Forest Assessment and Strategies](#) prepared by the Maine Forest Service in 2010 offers the following points with respect to the significance of Maine's forests.

- Maine has the largest contiguous block of undeveloped forestland east of the Mississippi; this includes approximately 10.5 million acres of unorganized territory which remain largely undeveloped forestland.
- The resilience of our forest ecosystems: Maine forests have been harvested for wood products for over 200 years, yet 90% of the state remains forested – the highest percentage in the country.
- The diversity of Maine’s forests: Maine has 39 commercial trees species – this contrasts with other timber producing regions which are dependent on just a few.

Forestlands and river/lake systems provide exceptional habitat for aquatic and land animals.

### Issues

A large portion of the land through which the Byway runs is privately owned and held for timber production. “Natural” (by the FHWA definition) timber stands are few and far between. We must be careful to explain the “working landscape” concept to Byway travelers.

A range of agencies and regulations which have been put in place over the past 40 years to protect the integrity of natural systems in the Maine hinterlands are currently under review. Substantial modifications to these regulatory systems could impact natural systems in the future.

Conservation interests have moved to protect vast tracts of land in the Katahdin area over the past several years. Although many easement-based conservation projects do allow and even encourage on-going timber harvesting, easements often require operators to use sustainable practices intended to protect natural systems.

### Relevant Projects/Initiatives

- [Keeping Maine’s Forests](#)
- Land conservation projects.

## **Scenic**

### Definition

*Scenic quality is the heightened visual experience derived from the view of natural and manmade elements of the visual environment of the scenic byway corridor. The characteristics of the landscape are strikingly distinct and offer a pleasing and most memorable visual experience. All elements of the landscape—landform, water, vegetation, and manmade development—contribute to the quality of the corridor’s visual environment. Everything present is in harmony and shares in the intrinsic qualities. (FHWA Interim Policy, May 18, 1995)*



## Description, Significance, Condition, Trend

### Long Views

Long views of Katahdin represent signature views from this roadway – providing the “wow” factor where they occur. The Byway group has identified a number of locations along the corridor where these views of Katahdin are especially impressive, including Ash Hill (Patten), the Summit Farm (Stacyville), and the area around Pockwokamus Rock.

Long views across water occur at various points along the Byway. High value long water view points include the boat launch area at Grand Lake Matagamon, the picnic area at the Dolby flowage, and launch areas at Millinocket and Ambajejus Lakes (at “the Lake”).

Of particular interest with respect to scenic quality are points from which views of Katahdin include water bodies in the foreground as for example at the previously mentioned picnic area on the Dolby Flowage and at points along the Golden Road (not on the designated roadway but accessible from it).

Visual evaluations of the rivers and lakes included in state agency studies mentioned in the Natural Qualities section note consistent and multiple opportunities to view Katahdin and other nearby mountains from the water, suggesting that the scenic quality of the corridor is significantly increased should a Byway traveler be able to get out on the water!

Finally with respect to long views, as referenced in the Cultural Qualities section, a considerable body of fine art painting has taken Katahdin as a subject. There may be no more compelling testimony to the “long view” scenic quality of the place than the fact that artists of national and even international standing from Frederick Church to Marsden Hartley to Neil Welliver traveled to the Katahdin area time and again over many years and in all seasons to render the mountain’s ever-changing and always highly dramatic aspect.

### Intermediate Views

While perhaps more limited with respect to “wow” factor, intermediate views contribute to the visual experience of the Byway traveler and their quality is also therefore of considerable importance.

Intermediate views include, per above, areas of dramatic topographic interest as for example the view of Traveler from Hurricane Deck. More plentiful are intermediate views of water, as for example at the bridge crossing of the East Branch south of Matagamon, the picnic area at the Seboeis River, the Shin Pond bridge, and the Grindstone picnic area which provides direct access to Grindstone Falls and where the roadway travels some distance immediately beside the East Branch. Togue Ponds near the south entrance to Baxter State Park offer lovely intermediate water views, as well as

picnic areas and swimming from a sandy beach. Again, for the Byway traveler who is willing to venture slightly off the roadway itself, several short hikes to intermediate water views are available, as for example via foot trails to Haskell Rock and Shin Falls.

Intermediate views also include fields and forests. As noted in the Natural Quality section, the Byway does travel long distances through working forests, which, depending on the which point in the harvest/growth cycle particular stands happen represent, may exhibit higher or lower aesthetic appeal. Open fields, some of which as mentioned offer great views west to Katahdin (Ash Hill, Summit Farm), are themselves visually appealing. Condition of roadside fields along the corridor varies depending on how actively they are being farmed.

Intermediate views may also include views of towns and villages. Towns to the north of Medway retain much of their historical character, and property owners are holding their own with respect to general maintenance levels. Portions of the corridor from Medway to Millinocket have seen considerable commercial strip development, some of which does detract from the visual quality of the area, though downtowns in this corridor segment are well kept and attractive.

Industrial installations occurring in downtown locations have their own aesthetic appeal and are kept in good order and repair.

### Issues

The area through which the Byway passes is something of a jurisdictional patchwork with respect to land use planning and regulation. The Byway itself has no “regulatory” authority. Maintenance of scenic qualities relies on conventional land use practices which can and do produce somewhat erratic results, again from a scenic quality point of view.

Of particular concern may be the gradual degradation of agricultural lands. When farming is no longer profitable in an area, fields quickly revert to their natural forested state, filling with early successional brush and obscuring roadside views.

### Relevant Projects/Initiatives

## **Historical**

### Definition

*Historical quality encompasses legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or manmade, that are of such historic significance that they educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past. The historic elements reflect the actions of people and may include buildings, settlement patterns, and other examples of human activity. Historic features can be inventoried, mapped, and interpreted. They possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association. (FHWA Interim Policy, May 18, 1995)*

## Description, Significance, Condition, Trend

Maine Indians have traveled through and lived in the Katahdin area for several millennia, perhaps since the last glacier receded as much as 12,000 years ago. Indians established travel routes using birchbark canoes to traverse river “highways.” Indian place names originally describing natural features (lakes, waterfalls) or navigational challenges are retained as a vestige of these earlier times and ways. ([Above the Gravel Bar](#), David Cook, 2007)

During colonial period, wars with British drove Penobscots to upriver towns, e.g., Old Town, Mattawamkeag, and Penobscot islands. ([Twelve Thousand Years/American Indians in Maine](#), Bourque, 2001). In eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Indian guides were hired to assist Euro-American explorers and surveyors. (James Francis in Foreword to [Above the Gravel Bar](#)). By mid-nineteenth century, increase of lumber activity on upper Penobscot River provided employment, attracting Indians to towns south of the Katahdin area. (Bourque, 2001)

Lumbering in earliest years (from 1770) was largely a small scale affair undertaken by families and limited partnerships. Pine was the species of choice, but by mid-nineteenth century, pine yielded to spruce as the dominant species. After 1820, larger scale operations were formed particularly focused on river driving. Late century decline in harvest for lumber and other solid wood products was offset by harvest for pulp for paper making in the last decade. Great Northern Paper was established in 1900 with building of large mill and a “magic city” in Millinocket. Italians, Poles, Finns, and Hungarians were employed. Work on the East Millinocket mill began in 1906.

Farms in the region were established primarily to support lumbering operations. Better soils in southern Aroostook allowed development of a more diverse agricultural economy in that area (Sherman, Stacyville).

Henry David Thoreau made three major excursions through the region in the mid-nineteenth century, assisted by Wabanaki guides, chronicling his journey in essays published collectively in 1864 as “[The Maine Woods](#).” Industrialization throughout the northeastern U.S. in this period and railroad promotion of travel for pleasure stimulated interest in the region as a destination among urban dwellers. Sporting camps were established.

Land ownership and conservation. While Wabanaki people did not claim ownership of specific parcels of land individually, as a group they held land in common for use by all. Euro-Americans were anxious to secure formal ownership initially to gain and protect timber rights, and this they did accomplish through a somewhat convoluted set of exchanges and laws, with “rights” emanating originally from the King of England. Land speculation in the nineteenth century resulted in a quickly changing ownership map, stabilized in the early twentieth century by Great Northern Paper land purchases undertaken to secure a fiber supply for Millinocket mills.

Conservation interests, and notably one man, Percival Baxter, beginning in 1930 purchased land surrounding Katahdin itself in an effort to preserve that area's natural systems in a wild state, and to that end creating Baxter State Park. More recent conservation activity (past fifteen years), often taking the form of conservation "easements" where specific rights are purchased as opposed to the land itself, have resulted in protection of a number of critical natural areas and securing public access and prohibiting further development across vast expanses.

National Park proposal. One large landowner in the area has proposed donating land to the National Park Service to be designated and managed as a National Park. The proposal has met with significant resistance among residents, but also has its supporters. **This Scenic Byways plan takes no position with respect to the advisability or viability of a National Park.**

Katahdin area "legacies of the past" (per the FHWA definition) include:

- River system ("river highways"), including associated Indian names.
- Later alterations to waterways that allowed log drives and powered mills (e.g., dams and crib works).
- Land ownership patterns.
- Mills and other industrial structures (Ambejejus Boom House).
- Towns and villages established to support lumbering, paper making.
- Agricultural landscape of southern Aroostook.
- Sites associated with Thoreau's journeys.
- Sporting camps
- Baxter State Park

### Issues

Scholarship regarding early settlement is limited to statewide studies of development of the lumber industry and smaller scale local histories.

Infrastructure for presentation of historical information is limited to a small number of museums, though existing institutions (e.g., Patten Lumberman's Museum, Ambejejus Boom House) do an excellent job with a particular focus on lumbering.

### Relevant Projects/Initiatives

- Millinocket Historical Society has a substantial collection of documents and artifacts and has purchased a building in downtown Millinocket for future development of public exhibits and presentations.
- [Thoreau-Wabanaki Trail](#).

# Cultural

## Definition

*Cultural quality is evidence and expressions of the customs or traditions of a distinct group of people. Cultural features including, but not limited to, crafts, music, dance, rituals, festivals, speech, food, special events, vernacular architecture, etc., are currently practiced. The cultural qualities of the corridor could highlight one or more significant communities and/or ethnic traditions. (FHWA Interim Policy, May 18, 1995)*

## Description, Significance, Condition, Trends

Cultural qualities of the Byway derive from both the natural landscape and human settlement and economy.

As mentioned, Wabanaki place names abound and give the area an authentic cultural identity. Other aspects of Wabanaki (specifically Penobscot) heritage include languages, legends and tales, traditional crafts and ways (e.g., herbal medicines, tracking techniques). The Penobscot Nation retains a strong presence in and connection to the area.

Immigrant workers who arrived in Millinocket in the early twentieth century to make paper brought their own cultural practices, some of which are still evident in physical representations (churches, cemeteries) and community celebrations.

Other cultural qualities derive from the evolution of timber harvesting with a particular focus on lumber camps and river drives. These historical activities produced a rich legacy of stories and songs as well as a sense of landscape scale and place-identity that is inherently cultural. Beyond practical knowledge, the people of this area hold a deep connection with remote parts of the north woods (Chesuncook, Allagash) – whether or not they themselves have ever actually been there (though many have been).

Hunting and fishing, initially pursued as a means of subsistence but eventually undertaken for more recreational purposes, have their own lore and traditional practice. Sporting camps, whose architecture may have originally been derived from camps built to support the timber harvest, represent a key architectural resource in the region. Local community events celebrate the region's traditional recreation heritage.

Though “cultural” perhaps in a different sense than that offered by the FHWA definition above, we note that an important cultural quality related to the natural landscape is the extraordinary number of artists, particularly painters, who have been attracted to Katahdin (the mountain) as a subject. Exhibits of their works over several years suggest a level of cultural interest in this dramatic landscape at least equal to interest in New Hampshire's White Mountains or the more distant Adirondacks, where “schools” of painters have been widely celebrated.

## Issues

The Katahdin area, not unlike many other rural parts of Maine and more generally throughout the United States, is undergoing a period of extreme economic and social stress, and such a period threatens the cultural fabric of an area whatever the components of its local culture may be. That said, a number of existing or proposed initiatives focus on cultural conservation.

## Relevant Projects/Initiatives

The Wooden Canoe and End of the Trail festivals, annual events in the area, put a focus on several of the cultural qualities mentioned above. Local organizations mentioned in the Historical Qualities section above also interpret and celebrate relevant local culture. The Patten Lumbermens' Museum, for example, offers a rich presentation on life in the lumber camps and continues to pass along the stories of that era.

Of particular note are plans currently underway to develop a cultural tourism project focused on Wabanaki culture. Plans include support for local crafts people, interpretive programs and facilities to convey Wabanaki knowledge and perspectives.

# **Recreational**

## Definition

*Recreational quality involves outdoor recreational activities directly association with and dependent upon the natural and cultural elements of the corridor's landscape. The recreational activities provide opportunities for active and passive recreational experiences. They include, but are not limited to, downhill skiing, rafting, boating, fishing, and hiking. Driving the road itself may qualify as a pleasurable recreational experience. The recreational activities may be seasonal, but the quality and importance of the recreational activities as seasonal operations must be well recognized. (FHWA Interim Policy, May 18, 1995)*

## Description, Significance, Condition, Trend

It would be hard to overstate the quality of this area's outdoor recreation resources. A combination of seasonal changes, varied topography, vast expanses of relatively undeveloped forestland, impressive and relatively undeveloped rivers and lakes, and a reasonably well developed infrastructure of trails, boat launches and camping areas allows this area to stand among the very best outdoor recreation destinations in the northeastern United States. Baxter State Park, with its extraordinary natural features and recreational infrastructure, plays a very significant role.

## Seasonal Activities

Lodging sales figures suggest that summer is far and away the peak season for outdoor recreation in the Katahdin area. Summer activities include hiking and camping, wildlife viewing and photography. New ATV trails are in development. Area waterways offer exceptional opportunities for canoeing and motorized boating, and whitewater rafting is well developed on the West Branch of the Penobscot River. Freshwater fisheries are robust and well managed, with (per Natural Qualities section) several fly-fishing only ponds within Baxter and the West Branch of the Penobscot below Ripogenous Dam offering truly world class angling. Hunting takes the lead in the fall season with bear and moose as primary targets, and in winter, the area supports extensive snowmobile activity.

### Infrastructure and Services

As noted, Katahdin represents the northern terminus of the internationally known Appalachian Trail and (not yet mentioned) the southern terminus of the relatively newly established International Appalachian Trail which now extends across Eastern Canada and, across the Atlantic through several European countries. It may eventually reach all the way to North Africa.

Baxter State Park offers outdoor recreationists a variety of rustic accommodations ranging from cabins to campsites. Areas outside the Park and along the corridor offer a wider array of lodging options, some including gourmet dining. Guide services and outfitters support excursions of varying lengths and degrees of difficulty, making the Katahdin area a true launch point for recreational excursions throughout what remains the largest expanse of undeveloped forest in the northeastern United States.

### Issues

Access to land for recreational use. Among many issues, we note that a very large percentage of recreational activity in the Katahdin area occurs on privately owned land, and moreover, that much of this land is held for the purpose of growing timber. Much of this land is accessible because of an extensive road system that has been developed to gain access to timber, a development which occurred when the practice of river driving was made illegal to protect water quality. By informal convention, private lands in Maine are open to public access for most recreational purposes. Most large landowners abide by this convention, informally allowing recreational use of their roads as well.

As a result of extensive conservation activity in the north woods over the past two decades, recreational access to significant areas has been protected by legal covenants, which in most cases also prohibit future development (building), and thanks to Governor Percival Baxter, lands in Baxter State Park are protected and made available for public recreation, though with some restrictions to retain the wilderness character of the Park. Other public lands in the vicinity are managed by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands.

Public lands, conservation easements and fee purchase conservation lands, privately held timberlands, and more developed areas create something of a patchwork of recreational

access and use restrictions. At present, there is no formal coordination of policies and uses to insure long term accessibility for recreation.

### Relevant Projects/Initiatives

## **Archeological**

### Definition

*Archeological quality involves those characteristics of the scenic byways corridor that are physical evidence of historic or prehistoric human life or activity that are visible and capable of being inventoried and interpreted. The scenic byway corridor's archaeological interest, as identified through ruins, artifacts, structural remains, and other physical evidence have scientific significance that educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past. (FHWA Interim Policy, May 18, 1995)*

### Description, Significance, Condition, Trends

Associated with cultural and historical qualities described above, we are aware of a range of potential archeological qualities in the Katahdin area. As Maine State Archeologist Arthur Spiess has said:

“Just about anywhere that is scenic on the lakes around Millinocket, one could put up a sign/kiosk talking about Native American/prehistoric use of the area since the last ice age, with a dozen or so sites (invisible) within the scenery.”

### Issues

Issues and challenges associated with development of archeological sites as visitor destination are well known and specifically relate to calling attention to sites and artifacts which are fragile or which could be removed from their current locations. Archeological sites often hold profound cultural meaning for living populations, and disturbing these sites can represent cultural and even religious desecration.

Although the Byway may attempt to provide broad interpretation of prehistoric activities associated with the landscape to the extent that we know them, it is not currently intention to point out specific sites of archeological significance.

### Relevant Projects/Initiatives

## **Market Data**

The Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) has identified stimulation of local economies through tourism development as the number one goal. To accomplish this goal, the Byway must attract customers for local businesses. To attract customers, we will need to



find out, given the Byway's location, set of resources and associated experiences, what market segments are most likely to come, what are barriers that prevent them from coming now, how do we lower those barriers?

We have identified on a preliminary basis two basic target market groups for the Byway: the "experiential" traveler who is interested in touring and generally learning about the area, and the "recreational" traveler who comes to an area to pursue a particular outdoor recreation activity. These market segments are quite different with respect to their interests and need for support.

We have reviewed information about these market groups and one additional, the cultural heritage tourism market group, to identify their character, interests, activity levels and trends. We begin with a look at national data with a look at the "experiential" traveler within a particularly appropriate frame – Byway travelers. We move from there to state, regional, and more local frames.

### **Byway Travelers/National**

A study sponsored by the National Scenic Byways Program finds that travelers have the following purposes for taking a trip:

- Touring: Travel by car, bus, or train through areas of scenic beauty, cultural, or general interest. The traveler may have flown to a destination to begin the tour.
- Outdoors: Travel that is undertaken to experience the natural environment and activities such as camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, rafting, snowboarding, viewing wildlife, eco-touring, or outdoor educational activities.
- Special Event: Travel that is undertaken primarily for the purpose of attending an event such as a fair, festival, pageant, or sporting event.

These three categories of travel represent more than half of all "marketable trips" (pleasure trips taken by car, recreational vehicle, or motorcycle) in 2006, touring trips accounted for 19 percent of marketable trips, outdoor travel accounted for 18 percent, and special event travel accounted for 14 percent.

### **National Trends, Recreation**

A [useful study prepared in 2009 for the U. S. Forest Service](#) responding to an earlier report which had noted a decline in visits to National Parks, National Forests, State Parks and public lands, posed the following research question: "Is there a fundamental shift away from people's participation in nature-based recreation and interest in nature?"

The study looks at trends from 2000 through 2007, finding that the total number of people who participated in outdoor recreation activities nationally increased by 4.4%, and further that the total number of days of participation went up by 25%. The activity mix changed somewhat during that period. The top forest-based activities include (in rank order) walking for pleasure, viewing/photographing natural scenery, plants, birds, and

other wild life, day hiking on trails, and visiting a wilderness or primitive area. The study attempts to assess the impact of events of 2008 and 2009 including the economic recession and the increase in price of gasoline. It finds participation in most activities holding steady.

### **Trends in Travel Markets of Potential Interest to New England Tourism Destinations**

A [2008 report on “recreation lifestyle” trends in market areas of potential interest for New England tourism](#) destinations is useful in assessing opportunities for tourism development in the Katahdin area. The report, which pulls data from the Standard Rate and Data Service’s (SRDS) Lifestyle Market Analyst, tracks trends in “primary, secondary, and tertiary” market areas. Primary markets include areas within New England. Secondary markets include New York and Pennsylvania, and tertiary markets include Maryland, Ohio, North Carolina, Georgia and the District of Columbia.

The following are excerpts from the article.

- The participation rate for vacation travel was higher for the New England markets (42.2 percent of all households participated in vacation travel) than the national rate (39.5 percent). Vacation travel rates in New England’s secondary and tertiary markets grew and exceeded the national rates by 2007.
- In all the New England markets, bicycling participation rates increased and were near or higher than the national averages. Bicycling is growing in all primary, secondary, and tertiary markets, and several metropolitan market areas in the secondary and tertiary areas are growing at rates exceeding 4 percent per year (a strong growth trend).
- After years of growing interest in wildlife and the environment, the rate of interest nationally (15.1percent) has returned to a stable overall trend and the overall New England market rate in 2007 (15.5 percent) showed no growth. The New England market area experienced growth in camping/hiking with a 2007 household participation rate of 19.9 percent, but this percentage was lower than the national average of 25.5 percent. Hunting enjoyed a stable pattern of activity between 1995 and 2007 in the New England market, and grew nationally. Although the fishing rates for the New England market exhibited a growth trend, the overall household participation rate for New England(22.4 percent) is still below the national rate (28.8 percent).
- For the period 1995-2007, nearly 17 percent of all U.S.households showed interest in cultural activities and 6.8 percent expressed interest in history and heritage. The rates in the New England overall market area (combined regions of primary, secondary, and tertiary) were higher for cultural activities (19.3 percent) than the national rate (16.9 percent) and the rates for interest in history and heritage were the same as the national rate (6.8 percent) by 2007. The national rates for interest in history and heritage experienced strong growth over this time while history/heritage interest grew (but less strongly) in the New England region.

## **Visitor Statistics/Maine**

[Davidson Peterson Associates](#) reports that during the summer of 2010, 37% of overnight leisure trip visitors reported that outdoor recreation was the primary purpose for their trip. 27% reported general touring was their primary purpose. Average length of stay for overnight leisure trip travelers was 3.9 nights. 38% stayed in a hotel, motel, or resort; 6% in an inn or B&B; 6% in a rental cabin; 2% in a tent campground and the same percentage in an RV campground. (Others stayed with friends and family.)

- Among 2010 summer overnight visitors to Maine, 10% visited the Maine Highlands.
- Among 2010 winter visitors, outdoor recreation ranked highest as primary purpose (29%), followed by touring (25%) and shopping (22%). 47% stayed in a motel/hotel/resort; 7% in an inn or B&B; 3% in a rental cabin.
- Among 2010 winter overnight visitors to Maine, Maine Highlands attracted 14%.
- In 2009, 20% of overnight leisure visitors came from Massachusetts; 18% from New York; 9% from New Brunswick; 7% from Ontario; 7% from Connecticut; 6% from New Jersey; 6% from Maine; 5% from New Hampshire; 5% from Pennsylvania.

## **Byway Travelers/Maine**

Surveys conducted by students at the University of Maine at Orono (2007) on the Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway and the Rangeley Lakes National Scenic Byway found that most travelers stopping at scenic turnouts and picnic areas were enjoying vacation travel or leisure activity. Approximately half of these travelers lived in Maine; a high proportion of Maine travelers were taking day trips. Of those who came from outside the state, most came from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. Most common party size: 2 adults. Approximately half of travelers were between the ages of 38 and 57 years.

## **Regional and Local Travel Statistics**

The Katahdin area falls within the Maine Highlands, one of Maine's seven officially designated tourism regions. Although some attempts have been made over the years to collect demographic and trip data on travelers who visit officially designated tourism regions, configuration of the Maine Highlands itself yields data that is of limited usefulness to the Katahdin area because of the large number of Maine Highlands visitors for whom Bangor is the primary destination. Visitors traveling to Bangor from New Brunswick to shop at the Bangor Mall skew the figures for the region.

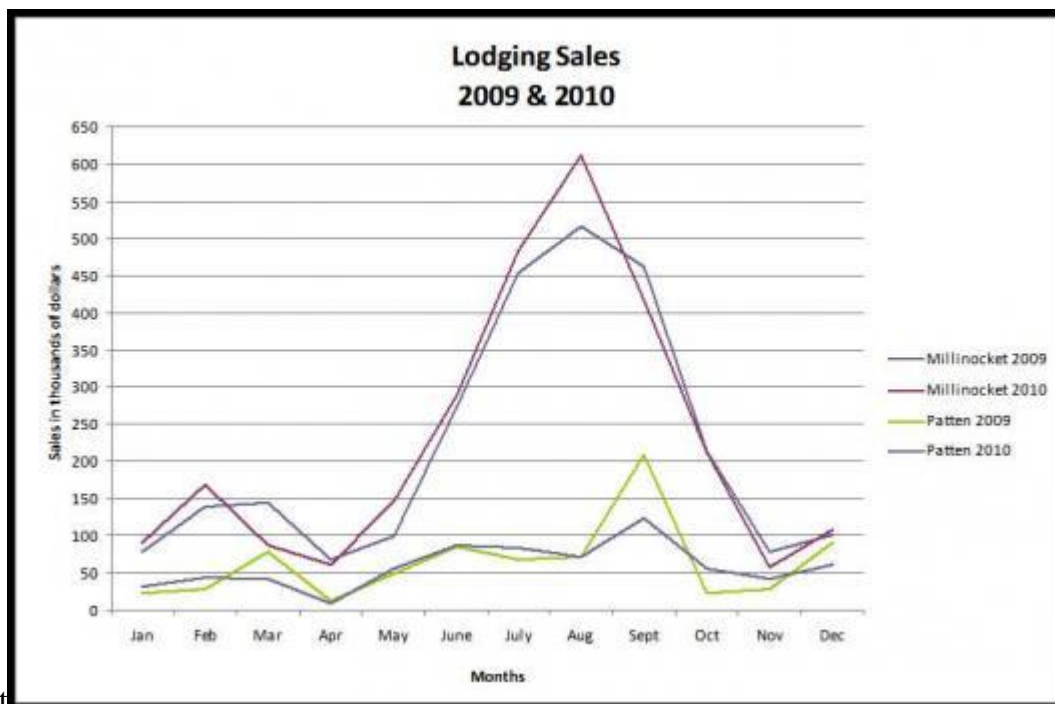
It may be that data for two neighboring tourism regions, Maine Lakes and Mountains and Kennebec/Moose River regions, offer some idea of the general profile of inland Maine visitors and by extension could help us understand the interests and characteristics of visitors to the Katahdin areas. In these neighboring regions, visitors tend to be younger, less affluent, more likely to be male than female than are visitors to the state at large.

Outdoor recreation ranks significantly higher as primary purpose of trip than for Maine as a whole, with general touring ranking somewhat lower for these areas than for the state.

An excellent study undertaken in 2008 by the Baxter State Park Authority to determine the economic impact of park visitation found that the age of visitors to the Park varies but is significantly clustered between the ages of 41-55; with the largest reported group in the 51-55 year old category. The study also notes that approximately 40% of Park visitors come from outside of Maine. The executive summary for the study notes that “The average spending for all visitors per trip total was \$606.70. Within the Park was \$28.35; within the local community was \$187.86; on route in Maine \$198.65; outside of Maine \$111.86.” Baxter’s annual operations report for 2009 notes a total gate count of 59,861 visitors (May through October).

### **Seasonality/Katahdin Area Tourism**

Lodging sales in the Katahdin region as calculated from lodging tax receipts indicate pronounced seasonal fluctuations in tourism revenues.



### **Scale and Lodging Type/Katahdin Area Tourism**

Using lodging establishments as one means of establishing the scale of the tourism trade in the Katahdin area. Bed count for areas along the Byway is as follows:

Hotels/Motels (total beds)

- Millinocket/Medway - 253

- Patten/Sherman - 17

#### Cabins

- Millinocket/Medway - 66
- Patten/Sherman - 44
- Baxter area - 66

#### Campsites

- Millinocket/Medway - 483
- Patten/Sherman – 77
- Baxter area - 266

## Structure/Visitor Experience



Per the Intrinsic Qualities section of this plan, the Grindstone Scenic Byway corridor does already provide access to an array of associated resources and experiences. What will now distinguish it as a “Scenic Byway”? Answer: a more intentional design for the travel experience and an associated investment in infrastructure to support that experience. Through this investment, the Byway excursion becomes more “organized,” giving the traveler a solid and reassuring foundation on which to build his/her own unique itinerary.

The Corridor Advocacy Committee has developed a basic conceptual “structure” for the Byway based on both the physical path and on the more general visitor experience as we can imagine it. The structural scheme anticipates that visitors will enter

the Byway arriving via Interstate I-95. “Gateways” occur off exits at Medway and at Sherman. Gateway infrastructure (signage, kiosks, etc.) will serve an important function on the Byway, making visitors aware that they are on the Byway and giving them a sense of what they can expect as they travel in any direction from the point of entry.

In addition to gateways, the CAG has identified “destination points” at Matagamon and at “The Lake” (narrows between Millinocket Lake and Ambajejus Lake). “Destination point” may be something of a misnomer as these points are really considered “jumping off points,” at Matagamon linking to Grand Lake Matagamon, the East Branch of the Penobscot River, and the north entrance to Baxter State Park, and at “The Lake” linking to the south entrance to Baxter, the lakes themselves (and from Ambajejus to the Debsconeags and beyond), and to the West Branch of the Penobscot via the Golden

Road. These “destination” or “jumping off” points also serve an important function, giving Byway travelers a location to head for from the gateways and making them aware of recreation and other opportunities available to them in the vicinity.

The CAG has identified a “service corridor” running from Medway to Millinocket, with Millinocket representing the area’s primary service center (retail, hospital, etc.). Patten serves as a secondary service center for the more northern part of the corridor, with other communities (and outposts) offering various levels of visitor service at several points along the length of the Byway. Byway travelers should be made aware of the levels of service available at each point and the distance they are from any/all points.

The CAG has broken up the corridor into a number of segments as defined by terrain and general travel experience. The most northerly segment, running from Patten to Matagamon, is largely undeveloped, wooded, remote, offering occasional intermediate views, including one potential “wow” factor intermediate view at Hurricane Deck. The segment provides access to rest areas, boat and canoe launches (Grand Lake Matagamon, East Branch, Seboeis River, Shin Pond), opportunities for short hikes to points of visual interest (Haskell Rock, Grand Pitch, Shin Falls) and longer ones (International Appalachian Trail). Service points along this segment include Shin Pond and Matagamon.

A second corridor section runs from Patten to Stacyville and includes the Sherman gateway. This section traverses an agricultural landscape (open fields), passing through a limited number of traditional rural settlements (Patten, Sherman, Stacyville) offering varying levels of visitor services, with Patten (per above) serving as a primary service center. In this section of the Byway, in addition to intermediate views of farm fields, we find at least two “wow” factor views of the Katahdin Range, one at Ash Hill (Patten) and a second at the Summit Farm (Stacyville). Recreational access along this stretch includes, in addition to snowmobile trail heads, a multimodal trail running from Patten to Sherman through Crystal Bog and seasonal road access to Whetstone Falls and bridge on the East Branch. Heritage sites in this segment include, notably, the Patten Lumberman’s Museum.

A third section of the Byway runs from Grindstone to Medway closely beside the East Branch of the Penobscot starting at Grindstone Falls. The Grindstone rest area at Grindstone Falls offers picnic, canoe launch, swimming and fishing opportunities, with a more developed recreation area at the Medway end of this segment (Medway gateway) offering more fully supported swimming and picnicking and a boat launch. Medway, at the confluence of East and West Branches and one of the earliest settlements in the area (the church here is one of very few buildings in the area to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places), hosts guide services and outfitters, an information center, restaurants and lodging, with additional visitor services available throughout the “service corridor” running west to Millinocket.

The service segment of the corridor (Medway to Millinocket) does include, in addition to services, at least one “wow” factor view of Katahdin, this one across water at the Dolby

Flowage picnic area. The segment, though characterized in places by strip development common in all parts of the United States, also includes major industrial installations which will be of interest to Byway travelers and are deserving of interpretation. Millinocket, the “magic city,” which (per above) is the region’s primary service center (retail, restaurants, lodging), offers particularly good opportunities for introducing visitors to the paper-making history of the area, with planned development of a historical museum a key component. The town has recently completed work on a bike/walk trail which, in combination with redevelopment of the town recreation area, offers a family-friendly recreation opportunity.

The final corridor segment runs from Millinocket to the south entrance to Baxter Park, passing by way of “The Lake” destination point. Again, this section runs through largely undeveloped forest land. “The Lake” location, the “last stop” before entering Baxter Park, offers a range of visitor services including lodging and restaurants, outfitters, canoe and kayak rentals, and even float plane rides. It is also the “jumping off” point for the Golden Road, a private road which provides access to points along the West Branch as far as Abol Bridge (Appalachian Trail) and beyond. Introducing Byway travelers to the “rules of the road” remains a key challenge (and responsibility) for design of the travel experience in this section. The terminus of this segment at Baxter State Park includes a lovely picnic and swimming opportunity at Togue Pond and an excellent introduction to the Park and more generally the natural ecosystems of the area at the Baxter State Park Visitors Center.

General considerations which the planning team has urged the CAG to consider include careful attention to helping the traveler understand where they are at all points (all times), what opportunities and services are available in which direction, distance to relevant locations and any particular travel conditions which the traveler needs to be aware of (“Need a four wheel drive.” “No gas next twenty miles.” “Limited or no cell phone coverage.”). The “structure” should be developed to provide a variety of high quality experiences sufficient to meet or exceed the expectations of key market segments, and promotional materials and programs should take care to manage travelers’ expectations accordingly. A shared understanding of this structure among all who have responsibility for resource management and visitor service along the corridor will be foundational to insuring a successful visitor experience.

## **Destination Concept**

The Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) has identified stimulation of local economies through tourism development as its primary goal. Members have agreed that we are unlikely to achieve this goal if we limit consideration entirely to improvements along the Byway by itself – even though that is the focus of hte plan. Achieving the larger economic development goal will take coordinated effort across a number of sectors aimed at both development and marketing of the entire Katahdin Area as a tourism destination. To help move toward the goal of economic development, we plan to position the Byway as a key attraction within that Katahdin destination area.

Development of the Corridor Partnership Plan has already incorporated a number of aspects of what might be considered “destination planning,” as our plan references a need for establishing working relationships between the Byway and a wide range of resource conservation, product development, interpretive, and marketing initiatives already in place or being planned by other organizations and groups. The Byway planning process has actively engaged representatives of these other initiatives in exactly the way that will eventually be required to properly develop and market the Katahdin Area as a tourism destination. So, although we are still focused on planning for the Byway corridor itself, we are moving toward creation of what could be considered a “proto” destination management organization – or “DMO” – even as we think about what sort of organizational structure we might require to implement this Corridor Partnership Plan. (see “Strategies” section)

But what is a destination management organization (DMO)? In attempting to answer this question, the planning team came upon an important article which lays out the relationship between achieving customer satisfaction (key ingredient for tourism success), managing the customer experience in a destination setting, and the capacities required for destination management. Excerpts from this article appear below.

From Strickdorn and Zehrer. “[Service Design in Tourism: Customer Experience Driven Destination Management](#)”

*The competitiveness of any service product ultimately depends on customer satisfaction, which is determined by the consumer’s assessment of expectations towards a certain service product and the actual experiences with the service process – the perceived service quality.*

*Tourism products are seldom provided by one single service provider, but are rather linking together various services (See “6 A’s” below) offered by different regional SME service providers. Since the perceived quality of tourism products relies on a complex structure of local service providers, **a holistic view of tourism products as tourism destinations gains importance** (cp. Buhalis 2000, Weaver and Oppermann 2000, Buhalis and Cooper 1998, Palmer and Bejou 1995).*

**Each experienced service within a destination affects the image of a tourism destination and consequently also the holistic perceived service quality of it.**

*Successful destinations combine diverse services, which can be structured as the 6 A’s of tourism destinations: **Attractions** can be natural (e.g. mountains, lakes, beaches), artificial (e.g. landmark buildings, amusement parks) or cultural (e.g. ritual places/events). **Accessibility** refers to both the transport to and within a certain destination. **Amenities** characterize all services facilitating a convenient stay, e.g. accommodation, gastronomy or leisure activities. **Available packages** refer to the availability of service bundles to direct the tourists’ attention to certain unique features of a respective destination. **Activities** refer to the tourists’ travel motives available within the destination both active ones (e.g. hiking, swimming, and skiing) and passive ones*



(e.g. sun bathing, wellness). **Ancillary services** are those services of daily use, which are not primary associated with tourism (e.g. health care, post and telecommunication) (cp. Opaschowski 2002, Althof 2001, Buhalis 2000, Freyer 2000).

Although these services are provided by various decentralized companies within a destination, **holistic destination management** is crucial for a sustainable tourism success. Hence, **destinations need to be equated with business organizations following four major managerial functions**, best coordinated by destination management organizations (DMOs):

- Strategic planning
- Product development
- Representation of interests
- Marketing

Furthermore, some DMOs assume operative functions, such as environmental management, disaster planning or heritage resource conservation (cp. Beritelli 2006, Jamieson 2006, Bieger 2005, Dettmar 2005, Müller 2002, Klemm 1983).

*Geographic scale.* The size of a destination depends on the distance the tourist travels towards it, i.e. the farther the source market, the larger is the target destination (cp. Luft 2007, Dettmer et. al 2005). Beyond the travel distance and the destination environment, the travel motivation of respective tourists influences the determination of a destination, e.g. tourists hiking in an area define the whole area as their destination, while wellness-tourists may narrow their destination on a spa resort (cp. Luft 2007).

In undertaking both the market analysis and the intrinsic resources analysis which follow, we have adopted the Katahdin “destination area” frame to guide our thinking about the potential value of the Byway as a tourism attraction, and we use this destination frame as context for development and marketing recommendations relating to the Byway.

## **Positioning Statement**

The positioning statement is intended to capture the essence of the project and also to inspire action, in this case action which builds and supports the visitor experience and which attracts visitors.

As a group, we have settled on economic stimulation through tourism development as our purpose and approach. We know what our resources (intrinsic qualities) are and must determine and articulate which ones will allow us to achieve a competitive (market) advantage.

In considering the Intrinsic Qualities categories as laid out by FHWA (see “Intrinsic Qualities” section), the Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) felt that the strongest categories for the Grindstone Byway were natural, scenic, and recreational, followed by historical and cultural as these relate to natural and scenic. The analysis of intrinsic qualities

included in this Plan confirms the strength of these “lead” categories. Market data suggesting continued strength for recreation tourism would argue for a focus on that market segment as we consider how best to develop and market the Byway.

That said, nature-based recreation tourism has been the primary focus of tourism businesses and marketing agencies for many years in the Katahdin area, and it appears that the area may be losing market share to rival destinations closer to population centers.

Is it possible to add dimension to what has been the traditional market focus on nature-based tourism, not abandoning what is (and no doubt will remain) the area’s core business, but adding to it, giving the region a competitive edge within its traditional market and perhaps attracting new market segments (cultural heritage tourists)? We think so, and we think the Byway may be the perfect vehicle for achieving this slight but strategically important change in “position.”

Given a spectacular natural setting, given significant recreational opportunities; where might this competitive edge come from? The planning team suggests, in response to the analysis of the area’s historical and cultural qualities, that it can be found in the stories of the area. Every part of Maine, and beyond that the Northern Forest (forested part of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York) has its stories, but none have quite the character and level of significance that the stories of the Katahdin area hold.

Katahdin, Maine’s tallest mountain, home of Pamola and sacred place for the Penobscots over millennia – and still today! Spiritual destination for Henry David Thoreau, who many consider the first truly American philosopher. Source of inspiration for Frederic Church, who traveled the world searching for the dramatic landscape that would make him famous as a fine art painter – and found it here. Northern terminus for what is perhaps America’s most celebrated hiking trail (the Appalachian Trail). Location of one of New England’s premiere early conservation efforts – Baxter State Park. Site of the construction of a “magic city” in the wilderness, and now home territory for the “American Logger!” These are great stories, unique to this place, and collectively unrivaled (as far as we know) in northern New England.

Positioning concept: *Active engagement in a storied landscape.*

(“It’s more than a walk in the woods!”)

## **Development Strategies**

This “development strategies” section of the Corridor Partnership Plan lays out ways we hope to achieve the purpose – stimulation of local economies through tourism development – through sustainable use of natural and recreational resources. The “intrinsic resources” section of this Corridor Partnership Plan will describe and evaluate key resources associated with the Scenic Byway. The “market analysis” portion of the Plan identifies key market opportunities. This development strategy section focuses on ways to use the resources to meet market opportunities.

## **1. Base Byway investments on market intelligence.**

Per the Market Analysis section of this plan, it appears that, given the Intrinsic Qualities associated with this Byway, market segments identified by the CAG have real potential. A review of existing data regarding the character, preferences, activities of both the “touring” group and the “outdoor recreation” group match well with existing resources and capacities along the Byway. Further, it appears that we may have additional opportunities within the “cultural heritage” group.

To better inform development and marketing efforts associated with the Byway, however, we will need data that is more specific to the Katahdin area as a travel destination. Investment decisions should be based on better market information than we now have. To address this issue, we recommend the following strategies.

1.1 Encourage the Maine Office of Tourism to support market research that yields current data that is relevant for the Byway location and target markets.

1.2 Develop a mechanism whereby local businesses and non-profits can collect and pool information about current visitors.

1.3 Periodically review new market data and adjust investment strategies accordingly.

## **2. In addition to market factors, make investments which build out a coherent “structural” design for a successful Byway experience.**

The “corridor” already exists as a somewhat ad hoc array of resources and experiences. What will distinguish it as a “Scenic Byway” is a more intentional design for the travel experience and an associated investment in infrastructure. Through this investment, the travel experience becomes more “organized,” giving the traveler a solid and trustworthy foundation on which to build his/her own unique itinerary.

In making investment decisions, including not only investment of cash but also time and effort, priorities should be determined by contribution to the overall Byway experience as defined in the “structural” plan. Critical points such as gateways and destinations, “wow” factor views and access points to high quality recreational or cultural heritage experiences will deserve highest priority.

2.1 Establish a process for identifying high value investment opportunities which address either serious deficiencies or high potential resource enhancements from the perspective of the overall visitor experience, with particular attention to critical gateway and destination points.

2.2 Refine structural design based on feedback from visitors and local businesses.

3. Enhance the travel experience along the Byway through improved roadway surface, edge maintenance, view management.

Although the Byway can be effective in linking visitors with the recreational and other activities and services they require, the basic experience of driving the road must also be of high quality. Road surface and road edge should be well maintained and safe for conventional traffic. Near and intermediate views should be well maintained, and long views, where these are available, should be open. Long views provide the “wow” factor, but near and intermediate views are equally important to the overall Byway experience.

**3.1 Work with MDOT to develop road surface maintenance and improvement plan. When appropriate, bring attention to maintenance/enhancement opportunities of high priority interest to the Byway.**

3.2 Work with landowners to increase awareness of qualities (scenic, natural, etc.) important to Byway travelers and where possible encourage management practices that maintain or enhance these qualities.

3.3 Work with towns to support local planning and community revitalization efforts focused on conservation and enhancement of key Byway resource groups (for example, historic structures and landscapes).

3.4 Work with conservation groups to conserve natural, cultural, and historic qualities of importance to Byway travelers.

**4. Enhance travel experience through infrastructure development (including information sources) along the corridor.**

Based on “structural” design, identify locations and systems that require additional investment in infrastructure. It will be necessary to undertake improvements in phases. Gateway and destination areas deserve early priority. Long views (“wow” factor) and access to high value recreation opportunities (water access, trail heads, etc.) will also be important for early consideration. Investments should be distributed along the Byway to assure a consistent level of interest and quality throughout. Providing consistent and high quality information through signage and eventually information facilities is also a key consideration here.

4.1 Based on “structural” design, determine high priority locations for infrastructure investments (turnouts, privies, kiosks).

4.2 Develop information system to support experience, including way-finding signage, face-to-face information sources.

4.3 Work with partners to create, maintain high priority infrastructure, information system.

## **5. Enhance (coordinate) linkage with natural resource-based recreational opportunities.**

A review of recreational resources associated with the Scenic Byway suggests that the corridor offers the traveling public, and particularly active outdoor recreation enthusiasts, a rich array of nature-based recreation opportunities. Resources include Maine's highest mountain, Katahdin, surrounded and protected by Baxter State Park. They include as well the lakes and rivers that comprise the upper reaches of Maine's largest river system, the Penobscot. Foot and water trails and backcountry roads (most open to the public) crisscross thousands of acres of undeveloped forestland. That said, long term Byway traveler access to many of these resources will depend on insuring appropriate behavior and use.

5.1 With resource managers, identify areas/activities that are appropriate for use by Byway travelers.

5.2 With resource managers, develop protocols for management of recreational use by Byway travelers.

5.3 Evaluate opportunity for linking Byway with other projects within a larger recreation tourism planning and development framework.

## **6. Add to the visitor experience through provision of interpretive information at key locations and through creating interpretive materials and media.**

Beyond providing physical access to key locations and activities, an important function of the Byway will be to add an informational dimension to the travel experience. Byway infrastructure and promotional materials should help the Byway traveler learn and appreciate the "stories" of the area.

6.1 Continue to develop thematic framework based on central theme "stories of Katahdin." Create full interpretive plan.

6.2 Work with partners (e.g., University of Maine) to develop deeper knowledge base of key subjects, ways to share that knowledge with collaborating organizations, businesses.

6.3 Secure assistance for existing institutions providing interpretive opportunities (e.g., exhibits, community events) which themselves put forward Byway themes.

6.4 Incorporate themes/subjects into all Byway materials.

## **7. Work with local businesses to develop capacity for gaining customers, revenues through interaction with the Byway.**

Byways, as they improve travel experience, may by themselves produce increased revenues to local businesses. This impact, however, can be significantly increased when

local businesses begin to actively employ the Byway and associated amenities to attract customers, develop new products (good and services), etc. designed to appeal to Byway travelers.

7.1 Encourage investment in up-grading or building tourism-related business facilities and programs.

7.2 Promote participation by tourism businesses in workforce training programs.

7.3 Based on market and resource analysis, sponsor product development activities that feature Byway associated sites and activities (packages, itineraries).

7.4 Build networks of local businesses and non-profits to deliver new Byway related products.

## **8. Promote Byway travel and associated recreational activities.**

Investment in resource conservation and enhancement, new infrastructure and business development, adding interpretive dimension to the travel experience – all great, but if potential customers don't know about them, the desired economic effect will not be achieved. Development activities must be matched with effective marketing, and the Byway will not be able to accomplish this on its own. It will take a coordinated effort among local businesses and associations, regional and state level agencies, all coordinating message and delivery.

8.1 Continue to upgrade market intelligence (segments, preferences).

8.2 Develop coherent marketing plan and revise annually.

8.3 Coordinate individual business marketing programs for greater efficiency, impact in gaining new customers for Byway related products.

8.4 Collaborate with regional and state marketing organizations to market Byway related products.

8.5 Find ways to use the Byway brand to increase attractiveness of local products.

## **9. Establish and fund organizational structure and capacity.**

Accomplishing the actions suggested in this plan will require coordinated effort by a large number of individuals and organizations sustained over a period of several years. We will need a solid organizational structure to do this.

9.1 Identify and engage key individuals and organizations to accomplish each of the above strategies.

9.2 Develop organizational structure and process, including information management and communications.

9.3 Establish benchmarks and progress monitoring protocols (“How will we know if we are successful?”).

9.4 Adjust development and marketing priorities as required.

9.5 Seek funding for high priority projects and activities.

## **Priority Projects**

### **Organization**

#### **Establish Byway organization.**

The purpose of the organization will be to represent interests of stakeholders, set priorities for future projects, raise funds or seek other support for projects, promote (with marketing partners) travel on the Byway, evaluate progress toward goal of increased tourism.

The organization will be established through a three-way agreement, UVEC, Katahdin Regional Development Corporation (or other Millinocket/Medway economic development entity), and the Katahdin Area Chamber of Commerce to “sponsor” the effort. The group will offer an RFP for part time staff once funds are raised. Staff will work on a contract basis for one of the sponsor organizations. Staff will organize and support a Corridor Partnership Team to include members of current CAG who want to continue plus others they wish to bring on. This Partnership Team will accomplish functions of the organization listed above (prioritizing projects, raising funds, etc.).

- Who: Sponsoring organizations include UVEC, Katahdin Regional Development Corporation, and the Katahdin Area Chamber of Commerce – with assistance from EMDC/PlaceWorks Consulting.
- When: January, 2012
- Budget: Approximately \$35,000 per year.
- Source: Private foundations, municipalities, Penobscot County?

#### **Establish communications, information management platform.**

The purpose of the platform is to promote communication among stakeholders intended to further work to implement aspects of this plan. Platform to consist of a website for seeking feedback from stakeholders, posting meeting announcements and notes, spreading the news. Stakeholders to include, per the “three A’s” in the Destination section of this plan, all who potentially impact (positively or negatively) the visitor experience.

- Who: Staff, with help from consultant.
- When: January, 2012
- Budget: \$25,000
- Source: \$10,000 within current EMDC/PlaceWorks contract. \$15,000 private foundations.

## Planning

### **Destination area recreation planning charrette.**

Byway organization sponsors a [charrette](#) (design process) which gathers managers of key recreational resources in the Katahdin area to explore opportunities for a coordinated approach to recreation tourism destination development. Participants would include (but not be limited to) landowners and forest managers, government officials, conservation groups, economic development groups, outfitters and tourism business operators, recreation groups (snowmobile, hunting, etc.).

Product would be a conceptual map for a “built out” recreation tourism destination area and principles for resource and visitor management and marketing.

- Who: Staff, with assistance from consultant (not yet identified).
- When: Spring, 2012
- Budget: \$ 35,000
- Source: Private philanthropies.

### **Interpretive plan development.**

This Corridor Partnership Plan has identified a number of key stories associated with the Byway. Further work is required to fully research and develop story lines and background data, collect images and other materials, frame presentations suitable for a variety of uses including educational and promotional uses. Planning would include full assessment of current presentation outlets including local museums and historical societies, special interest trails, and community events with an eye towards further developing local capacity to engage visitors in these stories. This plan would be undertaken in collaboration with local schools and University of Maine at Orono.

- Who: Staff, with assistance from consultant.
- When: Fall, 2012
- Budget: \$35,000
- Source: Scenic Byway grant request.

## Infrastructure

### **Infrastructure development: gateways and destination points.**



This Plan makes the case for investment in infrastructure at key locations along the Byway. Proposing kiosks which represent the Byway, inform travelers about points of interest, recreational and cultural heritage opportunities, and visitor services in all segments of the Byway, per structural concept. Consider additional kiosk at Patten turnoff as recommended by CAG.

- Who: Design from MDOT, with approval from Corridor Partnership Team. Implementation by MDOT if Scenic Byway grant request is approved. Implementation by volunteers if grant request is not approved.
- When: Spring, 2012
- Budget: MDOT is preparing budget. (\$400,000 rough estimate)
- Source: Scenic Byway grant request, January, 2012

**Infrastructure development: enhancement of “wow” factor view points.**

Implement plan developed for Ash Hill, MDOT.

- Who: Improvements to be designed, implemented by MDOT.
- When: Pending funding.
- Budget: \$250,000 (per previous grant request)?
- Source: Scenic Byways grant request, January 2012.

**Infrastructure development: Improvements to rest areas.**

Begin with Dolby Flowage, Grindstone, and Seboeis rest areas. Conceptual sketches from MDOT. Implementation of enhancements through MDOT (pending Scenic Byway funding) or by efforts of local groups, per example of Patten Lumberman’s Museum improvements at Seboeis.



- Who: Improvements to be designed, implemented by MDOT.
- When: Pending funding.
- Budget: unknown
- Source: Scenic Byways grant request, January 2012.

**Infrastructure development: signage plan.**

Develop signage plan, including way finding and interpretive panels, to insure appropriate support for visitor experience at all points along the Byway. Although this plan has laid out general standards for

signage and key locations given “structure” of the Byway, a more fully developed and precise signage plan is now required.

- Who: Planning by MDOT working with Staff and Corridor Partnership Team.
- When: Pending funding.
- Budget: unknown
- Source: Scenic Byways grant request, January 2012.

### **Medway Visitor Center**

The Town of Medway is proposing design and construction of a multi-use building which will include office space for recreation, town administration, as well as rental space. This building, to be constructed at the Powers Recreation Area, a well-developed recreation site on the banks of the Penobscot River in Medway, has the potential for incorporating a visitor information center which could serve the Scenic Byway and the surrounding area.

- Who: Planning by Town of Medway.
- When: Pending funding.
- Budget: unknown.
- Source: unknown.

## **Business Development**

### **Business development.**

Business groups work with member businesses to incorporate Byway resources and activities into tourism products based on “active engagement with storied landscape” theme. Destination training for frontline workers. Marketing training for managers again incorporating Byway/destination area themes and images. Financing for required facility and service upgrades.

- Who: Staff, business groups, Maine Woods Tourism Training Initiative.
- When: 2012
- Budget: ?
- Source: USDA Rural Development

## **Marketing**

### **Market research and positioning.**

Negotiate with the Maine Office of Tourism an approach to gathering data on current visitors which better serves specific interests of the Katahdin area. With the Office of Tourism, the Maine Tourism Association, and the Maine Highlands, explore ways to better define and position the Katahdin area as a visitor destination, framing the Byway

as a key attraction within the Katahdin destination area. Develop key words, images which can then be shared with area businesses.

- Who: Staff.
- When: Corridor Partnership Team will determine.
- Budget: ?
- Source: Marketing Partnership Program, Maine Office of Tourism

**Establish mechanism for tracking visitor satisfaction with destination experience.**

Use a simple Net Promoter Score program to determine and track level of visitor satisfaction with the Katahdin area as a travel destination. Net Promoter Score asks visitors whether or not they would recommend this destination to a friend, rating responses on a scale from 0-10, soliciting limited feedback on areas needing improvement. A simple formula generates a score, allowing comparisons with other destinations and allowing stakeholders to make any adjustments required to increase the score.

- Who: Area businesses with assistance from Staff.
- When: Beginning Spring, 2012.
- Budget: Minimal.
- Source: