



THE LAKE REGION GREENPRINT

A Community Partnership





The Lake Region Community Greenprint identifies the places most important to quality of life in Bridgton, Casco, Denmark, Harrison, Naples, Raymond, and Sebago. It highlights features that make the Lake Region a wonderful place to live, work, and play and that will sustain our natural environment and a healthy economy. The prosperity of the Lake Region depends on these natural assets.

Local leaders of the seven Lake Region communities recently set priorities for open space and natural resource protection. The resulting Greenprint is designed to help the municipalities and interested organizations guide regional conservation and land use.

CONSERVATION VALUES AND GOALS

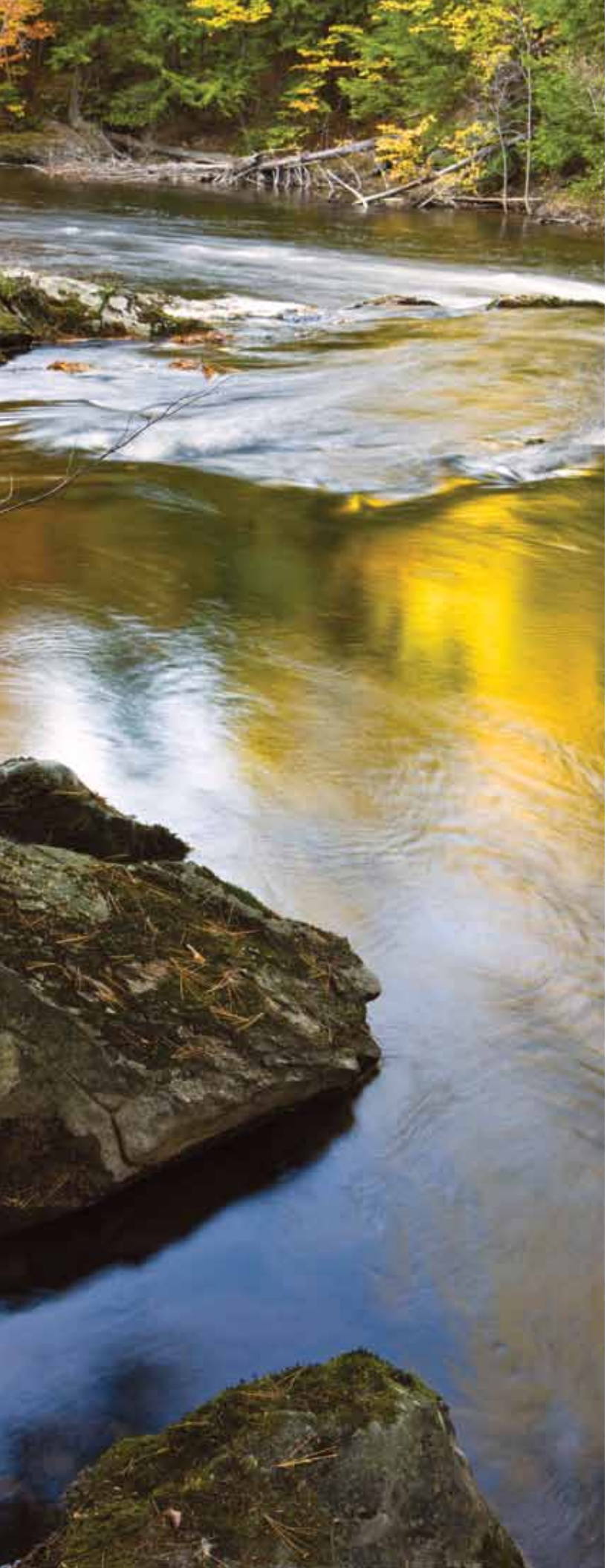
It's the pristine beauty and the community that make the Lake Region an amazing area. You can have sensible growth and places where you feel safe and part of a community. If we can promote that as we protect resources ... the environment will perpetuate that feeling.

—FRANK HOWELL, OWNER, DOWNEAST INC.

Local representatives formed a steering committee to lead the Lake Region Greenprint, which was facilitated by Loon Echo Land Trust and The Trust for Public Land. The steering committee convened a 60+ person stakeholder group—representing more than 20 organizations—that prioritized conservation investment goals for the region. Stakeholder prioritization was informed by 2 public listening sessions, 30 in-person interviews, a review of existing plans, and a telephone poll of about 400 residents. They determined that we need to:

- Protect water resources
- Preserve plant and animal habitat
- Preserve working farms and forests
- Protect scenic views
- Maintain the small-town character of the region's village centers
- Protect and enhance existing trails
- Provide recreation

The Greenprint combines multiple layers of information to identify the lands that contribute most to our quality of life. Greenprint maps highlight opportunities to work with willing landowners on natural resource protection, the preservation of working lands and forests, and new public access.



GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE LAKE REGION

The Lake Region is a popular recreation destination, drawing thousands of visitors to its superb natural areas and outdoor amenities. Tourism plays a significant role in the Lake Region economy, which mostly consists of small, family-run operations and is largely based on services to seasonal residents and tourists.

The Lake Region has experienced substantial population growth. From 2000 to 2010, the towns of the Lake Region Community Greenprint grew about 10 percent. Harrison, Naples, and Sebago have grown between 18 and 20 percent over the past 10 years. Residents have described changes to their communities, such as increasing traffic associated with tourism.

Over the past five years alone, more than a quarter of all land in Maine has changed ownership. Much of that land has been broken into smaller pieces and sold to multiple owners. Currently, only 4 percent of land in the Lake Region is conserved (publicly or privately owned land under long-term protection). In contrast, across the entire state of Maine nearly 17 percent of land is conserved.

The biggest challenge is going to be saving the natural resources that we have while balancing growth so that the new growth doesn't overtake the appearance of our communities.

—DEREK GOODINE
NAPLES TOWN MANAGER

Land conservation will help the Lake Region retain critical attributes of local character and support economic growth. For example, developing accessible recreational and scenic viewing locations encourages recreation and tourism. Conserving our forest and agricultural lands promotes the continuity of rural landscapes and supports local employment. Preserving our region's wildlife habitat ensures that hunting, fishing, and nature observation can continue to flourish. The conservation of these natural resources, in turn, will attract new residents and businesses, broaden the employment base, and diversify our economy.



ACTION PLAN

In the spring of 2011 local leaders created a focused action plan to implement the Greenprint. The plan proposes concrete steps with willing landowners and other partners to conserve the key water sources, recreational opportunities, plant and animal habitats, character of village centers, scenic vistas, and farms and forests that make up the Lake Region's quality of place. It also explores potential funding options that can be knit together into a "funding quilt"—a combination of local, state, federal, and private funding sources to help achieve open space and conservation objectives and amplify associated economic development opportunities.

The Lake Region Community Greenprint action plan promotes an acceleration of both the pace and the quality of land conservation in the Lake Region, asking residents and partners to:

- Strengthen participation and partnerships to implement the Greenprint
- Promote conservation of natural resources and recreation to support the economy and tourism
- Use the Greenprint goal maps to further land conservation with interested landowners
- Provide resources to assist municipalities and inform land use decisions to protect quality of life and small-town character
- Discuss and determine appropriate methods for financing open space protection projects in mapped priority areas

For more information about this project and access to all Greenprint maps, please visit: tpl.org/maine.

The Greenprint has brought focus to protecting the Lake Region's rich natural resources and identified the need for interconnected land use planning. The process motivated Loon Echo Land Trust, the seven municipalities, and all participating individuals and organizations to sit back and really think about what makes this place special and how it can be retained. Looking ahead, LELT will chart its future course of proactive land conservation with the new set of tools, goals, and action plans, knowing it has more support when conserving the region's landscape.

—CARRIE WALIA,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Plans are only as strong as the vision of the people who created them and the extent to which people implement them. You can help by:

- Sharing this publication with your friends and neighbors
- Expressing your support of the Greenprint to the participating municipalities and encouraging them to use the results in their planning
- Supporting the conservation work of Loon Echo Land Trust, The Trust for Public Land, and the participating communities of the Lake Region Community Greenprint
- Contacting Loon Echo Land Trust, The Trust for Public Land, or your local town office to learn more about this initiative and assisting with one or more of the action steps described above.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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