SCENIC ASSESSMENTS
What...Why...How

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Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

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Maine Land Conservation Conference
April 24, 2015
Why Are YOU Here?
SCENIC ASSESSMENTS
What are they?
Why are they important?
What’s been done already?
How can they be used?
How do they relate to comprehensive plans / zoning?
What new tools are available?
WHAT IS A SCENIC INVENTORY?

WHAT IS A SCENIC ASSESSMENT?
A scenic inventory is a means of identifying, describing, and mapping a community’s scenic resources.
A scenic inventory is a means of identifying, describing, and mapping a community’s scenic resources... those public areas, features, and sites that are recognized, visited, and enjoyed by the general public for their inherent visual qualities.
A scenic assessment evaluates information gathered in a scenic inventory and provides information that can be used to make land use decisions.
Focal Points
Lines
Areas
Scenic Area
WHAT MAKES AN AREA SCENIC?

A few examples...
Visual Access to Water
Sense of Enclosure
Symbolic Features
Traditional Land/Water Uses
Landscape Condition
Vegetative Patterns
Cohesiveness • Mystery
WHY ARE SCENIC INVENTORIES IMPORTANT?

- Understanding a community’s uniqueness
- Basis for determining what needs protection
- Enables pro-active planning and prioritization
- Provides the basis for certain zoning ordinances and standards
Increasing Pressures on Resources
Increasing Pressures on Resources
Scale of Development Increasing
Comprehensive Plans, which include scenic inventories, form the basis for zoning / land use ordinances. The land near the Cousins River will be preserved as open space and the impact on water quality and scenic views minimized.

Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plans, which include scenic inventories, form the basis for zoning / land use ordinances.
A BRIEF HISTORY OF SCENIC INVENTORIES IN MAINE
1982 Maine Rivers Study
1982 Maine Rivers Study
A PROPOSED METHOD FOR COASTAL SCENIC LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

With Field Test Results For
Physiographic Region I
Kittery to Scarborough
and
Physiographic Region II
Cape Elizabeth to South Thomaston

Developed and Written by:
Holly Dominie, Director of Natural Resource Policy Unit
Mary Droge, Natural Resources Planner

with assistance from:
Patricia Gaston, Paul Gobster, and
Richard Kelly

Field assistants: Bridget Everhart
Kristine Johnson, Jean Scudder

October, 1987

1986 SPO Coastal Scenic Inventory
PHYSIOGRAPHIC REGIONS
OF THE MAINE COAST

REGION V
REGION IV
REGION III
REGION II
REGION I

ADAPTED
FROM The Natural Regions of Maine
1987 Islesboro Scenic Views Map
1987: Maine Wildlands Lake Assessment
1989: Maine Lakes Study
SCENIC INVENTORY
MAINLAND SITES OF PENOBSCOT BAY
CRITICAL AREAS PROGRAM OF THE MAINE STATE PLANNING OFFICE

AUGUST 1990

TERRENCE J. DEWAN & ASSOCIATES, Yarmouth, Maine
BRISTOL DESIGN AND PLANNING, Canandaigua, New York

1990 SPO/CAP
Scenic Inventory
Penobscot Bay
SCENIC INVENTORY
Islesboro, Vinalhaven, North Haven, and Associated Offshore Islands
CRITICAL AREAS PROGRAM OF THE MAINE STATE PLANNING OFFICE

TERRENCE J. DEWAN & ASSOCIATES
JUNE 1992

YARMOUTH, MAINE

1992 SPO/CAP
Scenic Inventory
Pen Bay Islands
## Scenic Area Evaluation Form

**Islesboro Harbor**  
*1990 Coastal Scenic Inventory*  
*Critical Areas Program*  
*Town Islesboro*  
*Maine State Planning Office*

### Scenic Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>IP</th>
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|    | SI: Special Interest  
1. Landform  
2. Open Land  
3. Shoreline Configuration  
4. Scenic Features  
5. Scenic Quality of Water  
6. Landscape Character  
7. Vegetation  
8. Composition & Effect Field Evaluation |
|    | SC: Scoring  
Elevation  
Slope  
Type of Water  
Quality of Horizon |
|    | IP: Indicators Present  
Indicators Present  
Desktop Subtotal |

### Viewshed Description

Islesboro Harbor is a complex place of inlets, coves, points, mud flats, and open water, oriented to the east and northeast toward Cape Rosier and East Penobscot Bay. The rating given is a composite of all the component parts of Islesboro Harbor. Most of the harbor is visible from public roads, although its relatively large size and configuration makes it impossible to see all at once. The harbor is composed of several smaller coves and inlets, each divided by evergreen-covered rocky headlands. The majority of the small homes that border the harbor are located along its southern shoreline, clustered around Main Road or Hewes Point Road. The most prominent natural feature is The Narrows, a thin spit of land connecting both halves of the island. A seawall has been built up to protect the roadway from easterlies blowing in from the bay. A clearing above Bounty Cove affords a spectacular view across the Harbor, framed by a group of picturesque old oaks along the shoreline.

### Viewshed Management Recommendations

Protection of open fields surrounding Bounty Cove by conservation easements. Scenic easements on Northeast Point and the land east of Main Road.

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*Southerly view of Hewes Point from the Narrows.*
Scenic Resource Assessment
Gateway 1 Corridor

US Route 1: Brunswick to Prospect, Maine
-Volume I-

Prepared for
Maine Department of Transportation
By
H. Dominie Consulting
Readfield, Maine

2008 Gateway 1
DOWNEAST COASTAL SCENIC INVENTORY
HANCOCK AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES, MAINE

St Croix River, Calais

Prepared for the Maine State Planning Office Coastal Program by the
HANCOCK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION &
WASHINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

FEBRUARY 2010

Map prepared by UMM GIS Service Center, June 2000
Source, MEGIS, WCCOG, HCPC

2010
Downeast Coastal Scenic Inventory
Description of Scenic Area:

Head of South Bay is a small scenic area located near the Dennyville-Pembroke town line on Route 1. This scenic area includes inlet on South Bay with a salt marsh and coastal spruce forests along a highly configure shoreline. Public views from Route 1 are very short, and better in the southbound direction.
6) Cultural Elements
Cultural and historic elements in Holden include cemeteries, historic homes and farmsteads, barns, and stone walls. These are not typically the focal point of a view, but have important contribution to local character and scenic quality (as long as they are in good condition). Such elements gain some additional points in the "Landscape Composition/Historic Integrity" category, under the "Scenic Features" category, and under the "Landscape Character/Settlement Features" category.

7) Vegetation
The natural vegetation itself is part of the scoring criteria. As noted previously, landscapes with stands of trees in a maintained lawn or field rate high in general landscape preference, and there are several scenic views where the character of the vegetation is contributing to the overall quality. These views gain points under the "Vegetation" category and may also score well under "Landscape Character".

Prepared for
The Town of Holden

By
Wright-Pierce, Topsham, ME

October 2011
Monroe’s Field, as it’s locally known, is named after the family that once farmed the land, and is located on the east side of Route One 2.0 miles north of the Lincolnville/Camden town line and 0.7 south of Lincolnville Beach. The scenic area as defined extends along Route One for 0.24 miles and easterly over the 50+ acre open field toward the shoreline of Penobscot Bay, which is located 1,500 to 1,800’ from the road.
and other islands forming a continuous landmass approximately three miles away.

The Monroe farmstead buildings were removed in 2006 when development of the Harbour Pointe Subdivision began. There are twelve permitted lots in the subdivision but only four have been built on to date. The current views from Route One are over the tops of the homes and shoreline vegetation. The current rooflines do not block or interfere with the view of Penobscot Bay. The shoreline edge itself is not visible due to the vegetation remaining near the homes. The road into the subdivision is private (i.e., no public access). In the present condition with four homes, the view is not dominated by structures but, as more houses are built, that may change depending on the height, style, reflectivity and pattern of the roofs, fenestration, and landscaping.

Viking Lumber, located on the opposite side of Route One from the scenic area, is a commercial counterpoint to Monroe’s Field. This established commercial operation has grown incrementally over years and includes outdoor storage, exposed parking areas, and a variety of buildings.

**Scoring**

Monroe’s Field achieved a total score of 63 (39 from the office assessment and 24 from the field assessment). Using the values in the Scenic Assessment Handbook, Monroe’s Field is considered a scenic area of Regional Significance.

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**Management Recommendations**

As part of the long-range plans for the upper portion of the field, encourage the property owners to develop a vegetation management strategy to maintain views toward Penobscot Bay. This should include the following actions:

- Prune the existing vegetation along Route One to maintain view corridors.
- Mow the fields on a regular basis.
- Restrict new plantings that would block views to the water.

Within the 52-acre field, approximately 29 acres remain as potential future development. The town should consider several courses of action to maintain the views from Route One:

- Consider land use tools that would apply to this and other identified scenic areas within the community. These could take the form of zoning provisions and/or design guidelines that address issues of setbacks, preservation of existing vegetation, preservation / enhancement of view corridors, clustering, and similar issues.
- Consider cooperating with MDOT to develop a scenic rest area near the site of the Monroe farmstead.
- Consider other options to preserve the remaining open fields (e.g., conservation easement, limited development, land purchase, transfer of development rights).
- Work with homeowners on new site plans to minimize the impact on the scenic area such as requiring landscaping that buffers the view of new homes but preserves the view toward the Bay.
Scenic Views

A Panoramic views from ridge on Clark Road west of the village looking east toward Mars Hill Mountain, ski lift, and golf course.

B Distant views of Mars Hill Mountain to the east from Aroostook Health Center parking lot.

C View of Pond, Park, and Dam at Mars Hill Pond from parking lot between Park and Dam.

D Close up views of the Prestile Stream from the south side of the bridge on Route 1A.

E Panoramic view of Central Aroostook High School with playing fields to the south, agricultural fields to the east, and the village nestled in the valley to the west.

F Views from Boynton Road east to ski trails and wind generators on Mars Hill Mountain.

G Close views of the golf course from Country Club Road.

H View of the St. John River Valley to the east from behind north end of Mars Hill Mountain.

I Distant view of Mars Hill Mountain and agricultural fields from Smith Road.
HOW DO SCENIC INVENTORIES RELATE TO COMPREHENSIVE PLANS AND ZONING?
State Goal
To protect the State’s other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.

Legislative Requirement
The Act requires that each comprehensive plan include an inventory and analysis of:
Significant or critical natural resources, such as wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitats, significant plant habitats, coastal islands, sand dunes, scenic areas, shorelands, heritage coastal areas, and unique natural areas.
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Conservation Subdivisions
- Ridgeline Protection Ordinances
- Land Use Standards
- Design Standards
- Buffer Requirements
- Conservation Easements
- Scenic Road Designations
- Form-Based Codes
Identify Scenic Views

Continue to identify, inventory, and map additional scenic views. Create separate overlay maps to inventory the views. As methods of mapping and inventorying scenic views improve, the maps should be improved and brought up to date. Views from the major roadways should be included with views from the mountains and hills; significant views of ponds, lakes, and rivers; views of the bay from strategic vantage points; and significant views of the historic village areas; each as separate overlay.

Lincolnville Comprehensive Plan
Critical Natural Resources Goal #5
Impacts on Scenic Areas and Views

The Planning Board shall assess the proposed activities’ impact upon scenic areas and views... as identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Where the Board finds that the proposed activity would have an undue adverse effect on identified scenic views..., the Planning Board shall require the applicant to minimize such effects.

Woodstock Site Plan Review Ordinance
Section VII.1
Protection of Designated Views

When a proposed development is located within the viewshed, from a public street, road, water body or facility, of a view that is identified in the Scenic View Map on file in the Lincolnville Town Office, the development must be designed to minimize the encroachment of all buildings, structures, landscaping, and other site features on the identified view.

Lincolnville Land Use Ordinance
Section 18 Commercial Site Plan Review
13.6 View Protection
Preservation of Scenic Areas

In any development or subdivision larger than 15 acres in size or which contains significant scenic or historical areas, the Board may require the developer to provide up to 10% of the total area of the development or subdivision as open space.

Islesboro Development Review Code
Article IV § 45-64.A
Ridgeline Protection

When a development contains a scenic ridgeline, buildings should be placed 50 feet vertical distance below the ridgeline and tree removal should be limited.

North Yarmouth Land Use Ordinance
Article XI.11-3.D.2
Wind Ord: Scenic Resource Defined

Scenic Resource means either a Scenic Resource of state or national significance, as defined in 35-A MRSA § 3451(9) or a scenic resource of local significance located within a town and identified as such in a comprehensive plan, open space plan or scenic inventory adopted by the town.

Eastbrook Wind Ordinance
Section 4.0 Definitions

Note: based on the Model Wind Energy Facility Ordinance, Maine State Planning Office.
HOW ARE SCENIC ASSESSMENTS USED?
Designated Scenic Area
Initial Proposal
With Guidelines To Comply with Ordinance
APPLICATION

South Bristol
DEP: Site Law. § 484.3. Standards for Development. No adverse effect on the natural environment. The developer has made adequate provision for fitting the development harmoniously into the existing natural environment and that the development will not adversely affect existing uses, scenic character ... or other natural resources.
DEP: Site Law. § 484.3. Standards for Development.

No adverse effect on the natural environment. The developer has made adequate provision for fitting the development harmoniously into the existing natural environment and that the development will not adversely affect existing uses, scenic character ... or other natural resources.
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NRPA Ch. 315: Assessing and Mitigating Impacts to Existing Scenic and Aesthetic Uses

“...demonstrate that the proposed design does not unreasonably interfere with existing scenic and aesthetic uses...and that any potential impacts have been minimized.
NRPA Ch. 315: Assessing and Mitigating Impacts to Existing Scenic and Aesthetic Uses

“...demonstrate that the proposed design does not unreasonably interfere with existing scenic and aesthetic uses...and that any potential impacts have been minimized.
2008 Wind Energy Act

“...determine if there is the potential for significant adverse effects on the scenic resource of state or national significance.”
SCENIC RESOURCES OF
STATE OR NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE
A national natural landmark...
A federally designated wilderness area or other comparable outstanding natural and cultural feature.
A property listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
A state park

MT. BLUE STATE PARK
WEBB BEACH
SWIMMING - PICNICKING - CAMPING

WEBB BEACH Rd

32
A national park
Great ponds that have been rated as ‘outstanding’ or ‘significant’.

1,509 / 280 (19%)

867 / 66 (8%)

346
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A segment of a scenic river or stream identified as having unique or outstanding scenic attributes.

31,806 miles

4,264 miles of Sig. Nat/Rec. Res.

1,502
A scenic viewpoint located on state public reserved land.
A trail that is used *exclusively for pedestrian use*, such as the Appalachian Trail.
A scenic turnout constructed on a scenic highway.
Scenic viewpoints in the coastal area that are ranked as state or national significance in terms of scenic quality.