

**TOWN OF**  
*Island Falls*  
**MAINE**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

ESTABLISHED  2021



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## Comprehensive Planning Committee

Jutta Beyer, *Town Manager*  
Frank Porter, *Selectman Chair*  
Tony Bowers, *Selectman*  
Royden Hunt, *Selectman*  
Anthony Binotto, *Selectman*  
James Lord, *Selectman*  
Jeff Brooks, *Planning Board Chair*  
Frank Hill, *Planning Board*  
Phil Faulkner, *Planning Board*  
Dusty Lockman, *Planning Board*

Glenn McNelly, *Planning Board*  
Desiree Hawk, *Planning Board*  
Clarissa Porter, *CEO*  
Rebecca Drew, *Town Librarian*  
Debra Dwyer, *EDAC*  
Donna Davidge, *EDAC*  
Candy Rupley, *EDAC*  
Laura Farnsworth, *EDAC*  
Annette Stevens, *EDAC*

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## Special Thanks To...

Candy McKellar  
Dr. Roxanne Bruce  
Greg Ryan, *President, Island Falls Historical Society*  
Kathy Hoppe, *Environmental Specialist, MDEP*  
Dan Jacobs, *District Forester, MDACF*  
Emily Canavan

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## Consultant

Eastern Maine Development Corporation

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## INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive plan guides the future growth of a municipality and creates a collective vision for local community and economic development. As a long-range plan, the document serves as an inventory of current community conditions and trends and identifies characteristics important for local growth. Adopting a comprehensive plan consistent with the State of Maine’s Growth Management Act has numerous advantages including preferential consideration when applying for state grants, promoting local resource protection, and providing a foundation for land use related decision-making.

Following a framework established by the State of Maine, the Island Falls Comprehensive Plan contains chapters in which related goals, analyses, policies, and strategies direct future growth and emphasize community values.

- Population and Demographics
- Housing
- Transportation
- Economy
- Water Resources
- Natural Resources
- Agricultural and Forest Resources
- Historic and Archaeological Resources
- Recreation
- Public Facilities and Services
- Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan
- Existing Land Use
- Future Land Use

### MISSION STATEMENT

*To serve the citizens, property owners, local businesses, and visitors of the Town of Island Falls through inclusive governance*

### VISION

*An Historic Community with a Distinctive Heritage Growing into Modern Times*

## ***A VISION FOR THE FUTURE***

While a comprehensive plan describes methods and actions essential for community and economic development, the plan’s vision statement represents the long-term goal of how the municipality desires to look and operate in the future. With leadership from Island Falls’ Economic Development Advisory Committee and an analysis of the community’s strengths, challenges, opportunities, and developmental goals, a vision was reached: “An Historic Community Growing into Modern Times.” Along with the forward-thinking approach to embrace modern times, comes thoughtful consideration towards ensuring the protection and conservation of local natural, cultural, and historical resources that the community places high value on. Without losing sight of local and regional history, the vision statement supports infrastructural growth and community improvements that are critical to fostering the attraction of retention of residents and businesses, meeting transportation needs, and protecting areas rich in natural and cultural resources.

## ***PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SUMMARY***

Participation from the Island Falls community played an essential role in the comprehensive planning process. Throughout the plan’s four phases, a Comprehensive Planning Committee consisting of the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Economic Development Advisory Committee, and other community members held public meetings to discuss plan chapters and the planning process. Eight individuals from the community and state departments including Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry participated in one-on-one interviews to provide local knowledge and inform particular areas of the plan including the Transportation, Natural Resources, Water Resources, and Historic and Archaeological Resources chapters. In December of 2020, a survey was distributed to the town to assess public perceptions of Island Falls’ quality of life as well as community opportunities and challenges. To enhance participation, surveys were accessible online and on paper in the Town Office. Upon the deadline, one hundred and twenty individuals participated in the survey. Through the community survey, personal interviews, and Comprehensive Planning Committee, local involvement shaped and enriched the plan’s vision and analyses.

## ***REGIONAL COORDINATION PROGRAM***

In its rural setting in southern Aroostook County, Island Falls coordinates with other local municipalities and with the greater Katahdin region in a variety of ways. At Southern Aroostook Community School (SACS), Regional School Unit (RSU) 50 located in Dyer Brook, provides elementary, middle, and high school learning for the towns of Crystal, Dyer Brook, Hersey, Island Falls, Merrill, Oakfield, and Smyrna. A School Board Committee comprised of

representatives from each community regularly meets to evaluate educational programs and operations. The Island Falls Fire Department provides emergency services to seventeen municipalities surrounding the community, ensuring the safety of both in-town residents and those residing in local municipalities. To promote water resource protection and preservation, the Island Falls Lakes Association (IFLA) partners with the Maine Lakes Society, Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program, Lake Smart Property Award, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Audubon Society, and the Town of Dyer Brook.

At the regional level, Island Falls is located in Northern Maine Development Commission's (NMDC) Economic Development District which encompasses municipalities in Aroostook and Washington counties. Following NMDC's lead, the communities work together to accomplish the goals and strategies in the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to reach long-term economic prosperity. Another regional plan, *Katahdin Gazetteer: A Roadmap to the Future* by the Katahdin Collaborative, guides the Katahdin Region towards economic development and a greater quality of life. Partnerships and the sharing of resources and information are essential for mitigating local and regional challenges and identifying opportunities. Through the maintenance of communication and collaboration with local municipalities and the greater Katahdin region, the Town of Island Falls will successfully continue the collective management of valuable resources including education, emergency response services, natural resources, and water resources.

As a result of the lack of active comprehensive plans in the Town of Crystal, bordering Island Falls to the west, and the Town of Dyer Brook, bordering Island Falls to the north, no policy or strategy conflicts were identified.

## **EVALUATION**

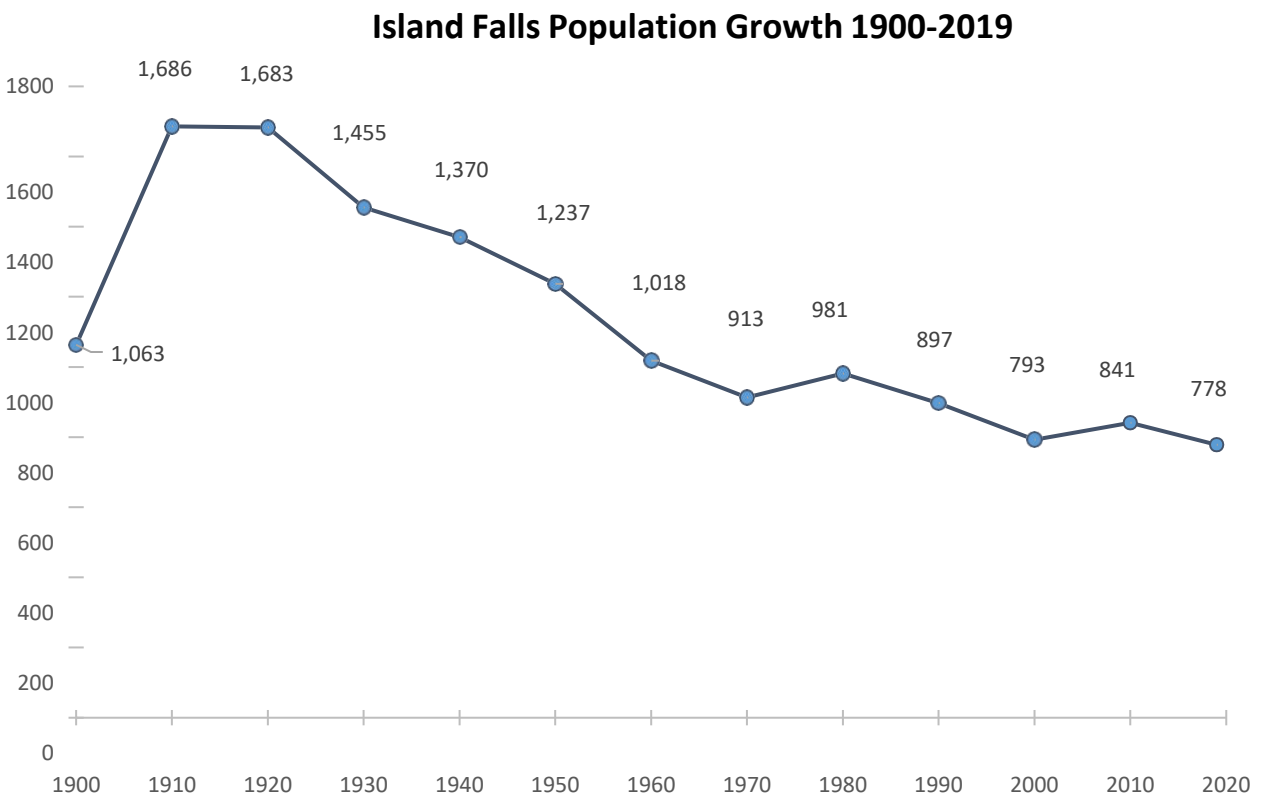
The community will routinely monitor the degree to which future land use plan strategies have been implemented, the location and amount of new development, and the completion of capital investment projects. As new data becomes available over time, the existing data in the Comprehensive Plan chapters will be updated to ensure its contents are current and relevant.



# POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

## Population Growth

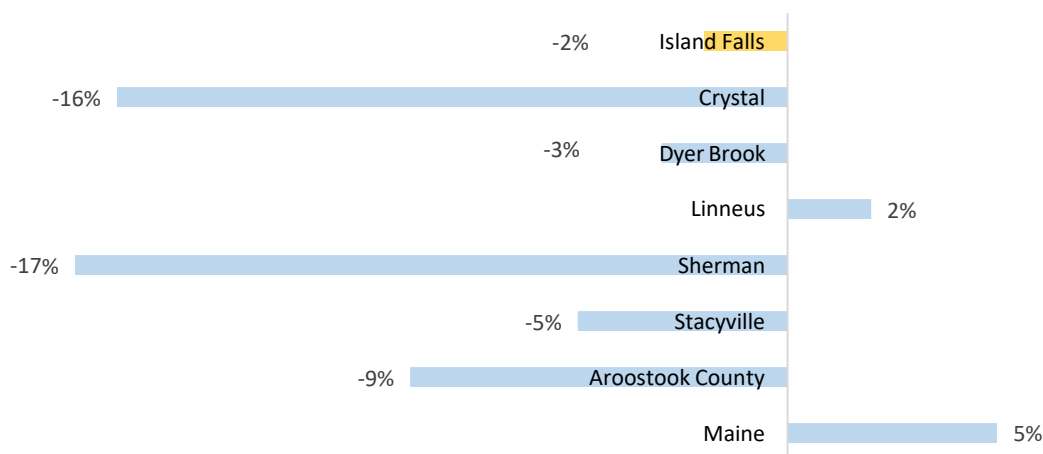
Over the past hundred years, from 1900 to 2019, the population of Island Falls has fluctuated but overall, decreased from 1,063 residents to 778. Between 1900 and 1910, Island Falls' population grew drastically by 623 residents and peaked at 1,686. Population growth steadily decreased between 1920 and 1970, losing approximately 150 people per decade. The town's population experienced a slight increase of 68 residents between 1970 and 1980. Since 1980, the population of Island Falls has decreased by approximately 80 people per decade with the exception of 2000-2010, when the town's population grew by 48 people.



Source: U.S Census Bureau



## Comparative Population Growth 2000-2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

From 2000 to 2019, Island Falls' population decreased by about 2%. When compared to surrounding communities, Island Falls experienced the least amount of population loss in the region. Crystal and Sherman experienced the highest percentage of population loss at approximately 16% and 17% respectively. The population loss experienced in Island Falls was less than that of the 9% decrease of Aroostook County's population, from 73,872 to 67,055. During this same period, Maine's population grew by 5%.

### ***Age Distribution***

As of 2018, Island Falls' median<sup>1</sup> age was 54.1, significantly above the state and county averages. Overall, Island Falls' change in population distribution between 2000 and 2018 indicated a decline in school-aged children and a rise in the elderly population. Island Falls' population of children under the age of 5 decreased by more than 50% over an 18-year period. By comparison, the number of children under the age of 5 in Aroostook County declined by approximately 11%. Between 2000 and 2018, Island Falls' population of children in the 5-17 age group declined by about 10% whereas at the county level, the 5-17 age group declined by a higher percentage at 16%.

Among the older age groups, in 2018, about 7% of the town's population was 35-44 years old, about 25% was 45-64 years old, and approximately 35% was 65-84 years old. Between 2000 and 2018, the 45-64 age group has declined by 15%, the population of 35-44 year olds has

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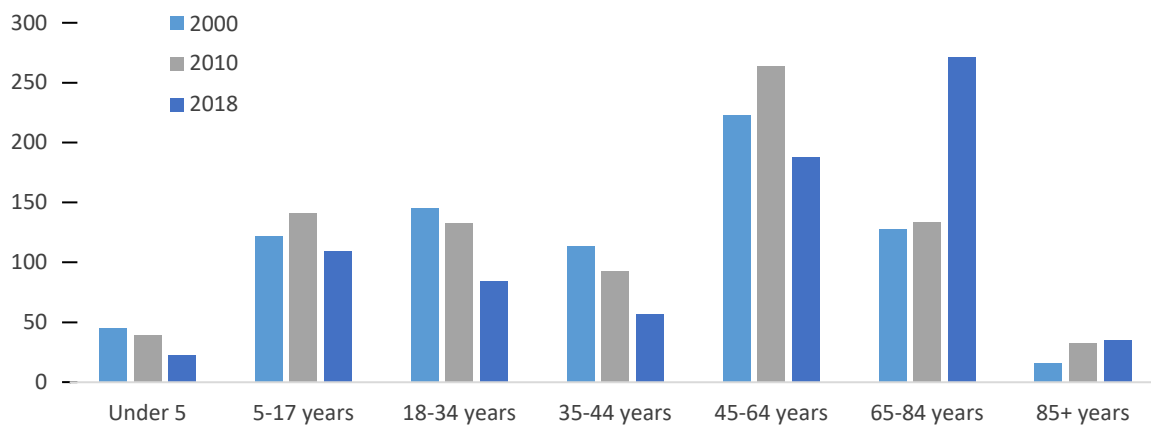
<sup>1</sup> The term "Median" is defined as the center point of the data set being discussed, with an equal amount of points above and below the number.

declined by 50%. During this same period, the population of 65-84 year olds increased by 112% and the population of individuals in the 85 years or older age bracket increased by 118%.

In 2000, the 45-64 age group represented the most dominant age group in Island Falls – about 28% of all residents were in this age bracket. By 2018, this number decreased to 25%. In 2000, the 65-84 age group was the second most dominant age group in Island Falls and by 2018, it was the most dominant age group, representing about 35% of the community.

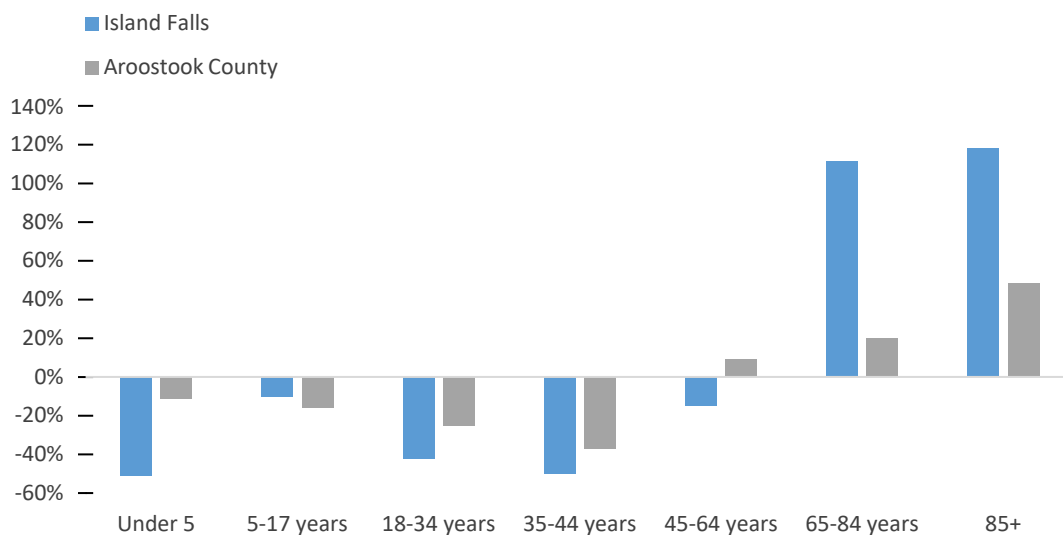
These trends emphasize the aging population of Island Falls and Aroostook County as well as the decreasing population of younger families.

### Island Falls Population by Age Group 2000-2018



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Comparative Change in Population by Age Group 2000-2018

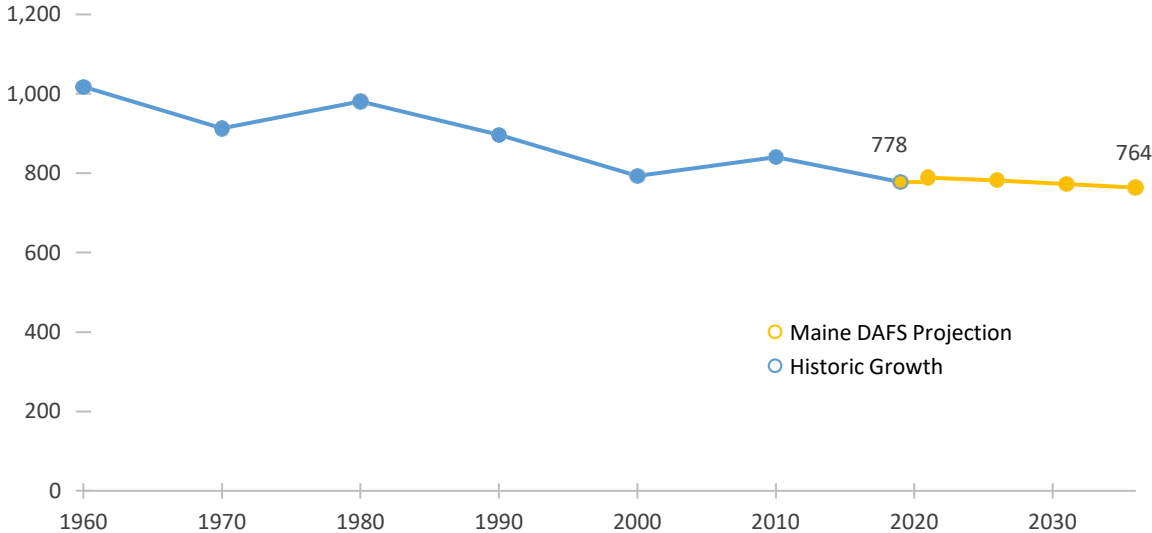


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

# Population Projections

Projections of future population are dependent upon a solid understanding of historic growth trends in Island Falls. The Maine Office of Policy and Management projected county-level population changes through 2036 using the widely-utilized cohort-component method. This methodology uses births, deaths and migrations to advance each age-sex cohort through the projection period. The county level population growth was then allocated to individual towns proportional to the town’s current share of county population. Based on this model, current growth trends in Island Falls are expected to continue. The population is projected to decrease by about 0.5% per decade until 2036, a decrease of just 14 people over 17 years.

Island Falls Population Projection 1960-2036



Source: Maine Office of Policy and Management

# Population Density

The population density of Island Falls is approximately double that of Aroostook County and approximately half as dense as the State. In comparison with neighboring communities, the population and housing density of Island Falls is most comparable to the Town of Sherman. Crystal and Dyer Brook are less dense, with 6 residents per square mile and 5 residents per square mile, respectively. Island Falls and Sherman have the highest density, with 19 residents per square mile respectively. The housing density of Island Falls is greater than that of Aroostook County, with an average of 322 total housing units and 8 housing units per square mile. Compared to neighboring communities, the housing density of Island Falls has the second-highest housing density and is more than half as dense as the State.

## Comparative Population Density 2018

	Population Density		Housing Density	
	Total residents	(Residents per square mile)	Total housing units	(Housing units per square mile)
Island Falls	781	19	322	8
Crystal	248	6	109	3
Dyer Brook	195	5	114	3
Linneus	916	20	260	6
Sherman	780	19	368	9
Stacyville	384	10	185	5
Aroostook County	67,318	10	39,876	6
Maine	1,344,212	38	739,077	21

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Seasonal Housing

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, seasonal housing is defined as vacant housing units intended for occupancy only during certain seasons of the year and are found primarily in resort areas. Owners of these units were counted in their usual place of residence when the Census was conducted. In Island Falls, there is a considerable number of seasonal housing units that contribute to the town’s housing stock. Between 2000 and 2010, seasonal housing in Island Falls increased slightly, from 231 units to 234 units.

### Island Falls Seasonal Housing 2000-2010

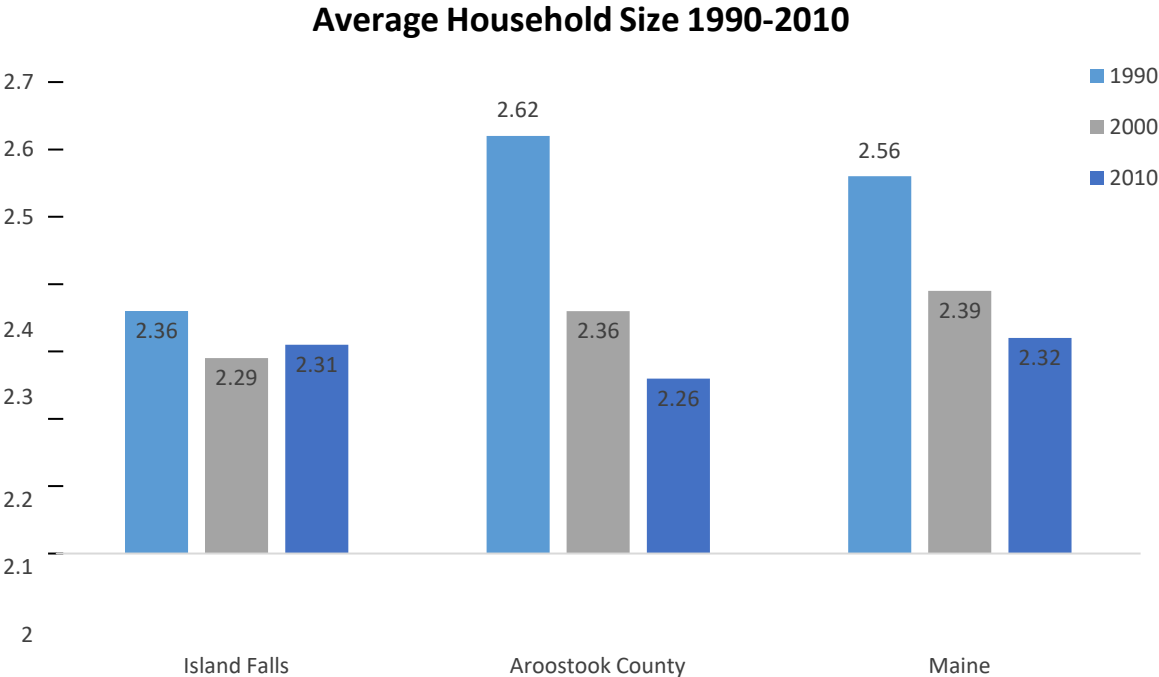
	Seasonal Housing	Occupants
		(Assuming an average of 4 occupants per lodging facility)
2000	231	924
2010	234	936

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Household Size

As defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, household size is determined by counting all the people occupying a housing unit. Over time, average household size is declining at the local level in Island Falls, at the county level in Aroostook County, and at the State level in Maine. Between 1990 and 2000, the average household size in Island Falls declined from 2.36 to 2.31, a less drastic decline than that of Aroostook County and Maine. In Aroostook County, the average household size decreased from 2.62 in 1990 to 2.26 in 2010, a decline of .36. During the same

period of time, Maine’s average household size decreased from 2.56 to 2.32. In 1990, households were generally smaller in Island Falls than across the county and state, with an average household size of 2.36, compared to 2.62 in Aroostook County and 2.56 in Maine. In 2010, Island Falls’ average household size was greater than that of Aroostook County although slightly smaller than the state’s average household size.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Household Composition**

The U.S. Census Bureau designates households by type – nonfamily and family. While non-family households are defined as people who live alone or who share their residence with unrelated individuals, family households include at least two individuals related by birth, marriage, or adoption, but may also include other unrelated people. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of households has increased by 11, an increase of 3.2%. Of the total households in 2000, 229 were family households and the remaining 117 were non-family households. While the number of family households increased by 15.3% between 2000 and 2010, from 229 to 264, the number of non-family households decreased by 4.3%, from 117 to 112. During the same time period, average family size increased by 2.5%. These trends suggest that between 2000 and 2010, the number of families residing in Island Falls increased.

## Island Falls Snapshot (2000-2010)

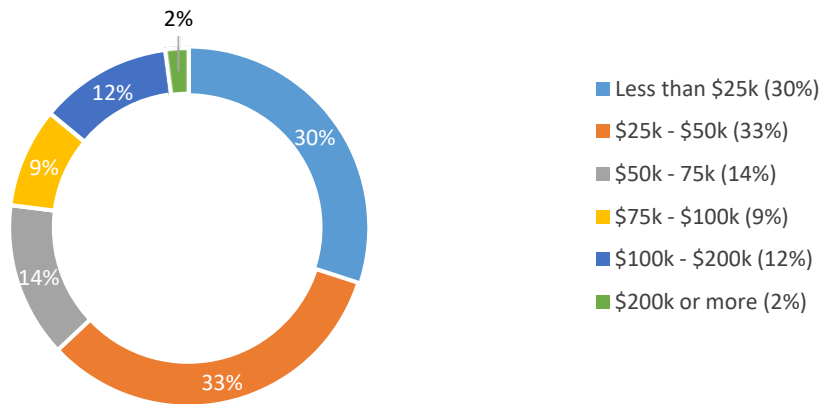
	2000	2010	% Change
<b>Total Population</b>	793	837	5.5%
Female	416	422	1.4%
Male	377	415	10.0%
<b>Median Age</b>	42.6	46.4	8.9%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	635	655	3.1%
Owner Occupied	264	287	8.7%
Renter Occupied	82	70	-14.6%
Vacant	289	298	3.1%
<b>Total Households</b>	346	357	3.2%
Family Households	229	264	15.3%
Non-Family Households	117	112	-4.3%
<b>Average Household Size</b>	2.29	2.31	0.8%
<b>Average Family Size</b>	2.81	2.88	2.5%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$27,083	\$38,636	42.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### ***Household Income***

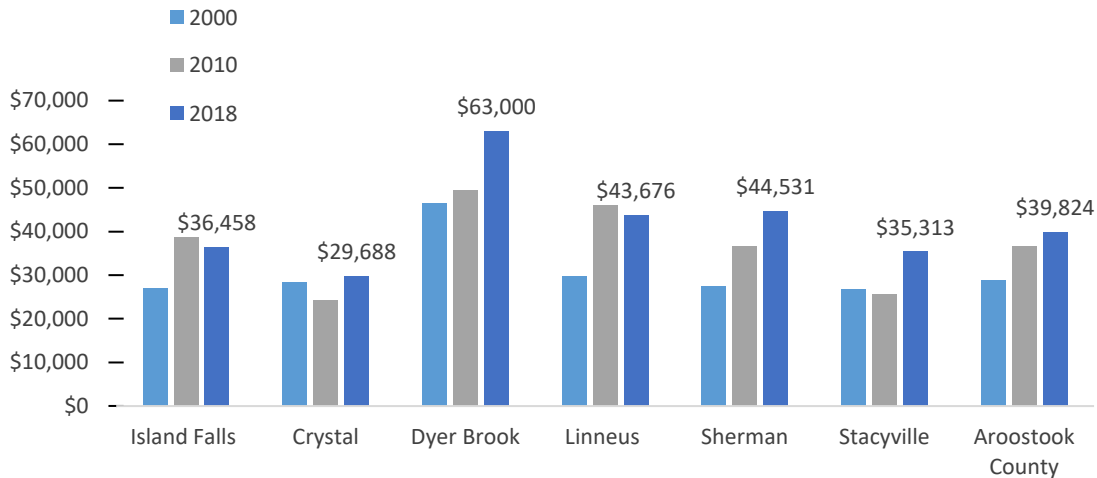
In Island Falls, 33% of individuals earn \$25,000 to \$50,000 and 30% earn less than \$25,000 on an annual basis. Less than 20% of residents earn \$50,000 to \$75,000 and less than 15% earn \$100,000 to \$200,000. The smallest percentage of residents - 2% - earn \$200,000 or more. According to the 2014-2018 American Community Survey, 14.7% of people in Island Falls were in poverty. Of the population of children under 18, 5.4 percent were below the poverty level. At the opposite end of the spectrum, over 17% of people 65 years and over were below the poverty level.

## Island Falls Household Income Distribution 2018



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

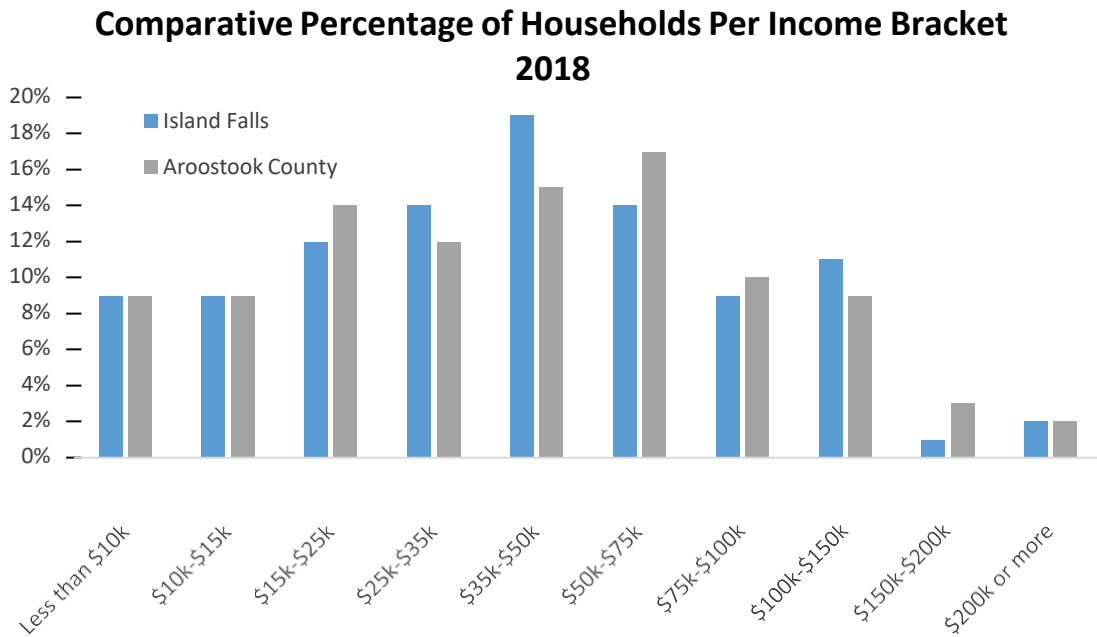
## Comparative Median Household Income (2018 Dollars) 2000-2018



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

In 2018, the median household income in Island Falls was \$36,458. Similar to Island Falls, neighboring communities and Aroostook County as a whole have experienced an overall increase in their median household income over time. However, compared to neighboring communities, income in Island Falls is relatively low. In 2000, median household income in Island Falls was \$27,083 and peaked in 2010 at \$38,636. The pattern of income growth in Island Falls is most similar to Linneus, where median income also peaked in 2010 before decreasing slightly in 2018. Between 2000 and 2010, median household income in Island Falls grew by 9,375. The Town of Dyer Brook experienced the highest increase in median income during this

time period, \$16,571, whereas the Town of Crystal experienced the least amount of income growth, by \$1,216.



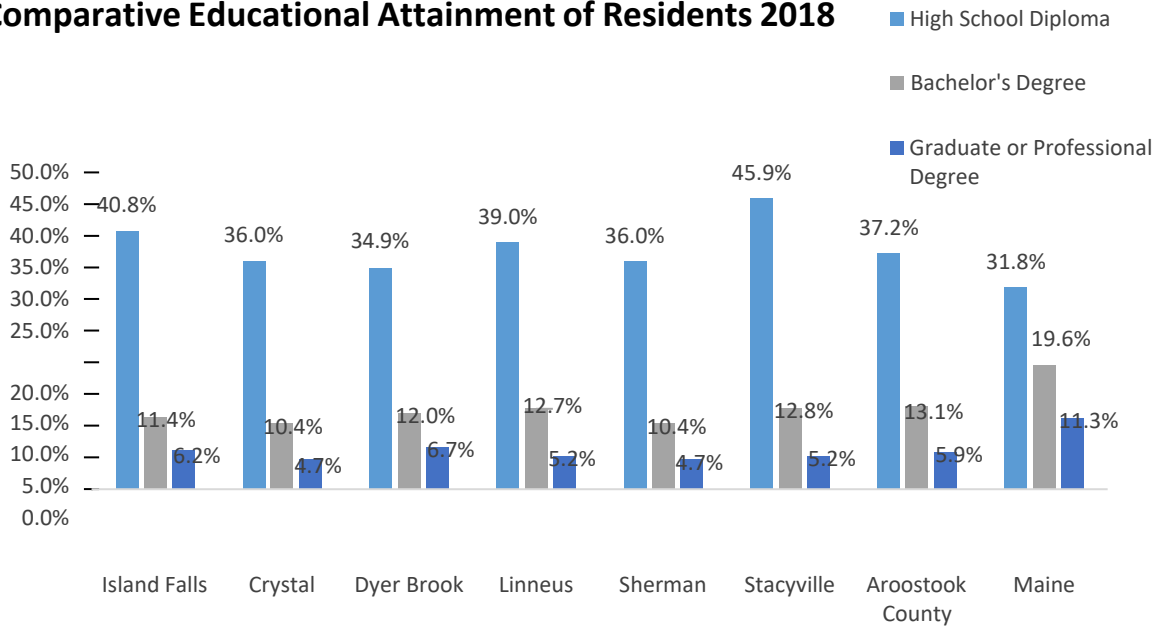
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Education

Island Falls has a well-educated population that has similar education levels to nearby communities. The percentage of Island Falls residents that earned a high school diploma is higher than the average for Aroostook County and State. About 41% of town residents are high school graduates compared to 32% of Maine residents. The 6.2% of Island Falls residents that earned a graduate or professional degree surpasses the county average of 5.9%.



## Comparative Educational Attainment of Residents 2018



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Race and Ethnicity

Between 2000 and 2010, the population of “white alone” residents decreased across Island Falls, Aroostook County, and the state of Maine, as racial diversity experienced a gradual increase. During this period of time, Island Falls’ population of “white alone” residents decreased by the same percentage as the state – 1.7%. In contrast, Island Falls’ population of “Black and African American alone” residents increased by 0.4%. Similarly, Island Falls’ population of residents that are Native American alone, Native Hawaiian alone, some other race alone, or two or more races increased by 1.4% - a higher percentage of growth than Aroostook County – while the population of “Asian alone” residents remained at 0.1%.

### Race and Ethnicity of Residents 2000-2010

	Island Falls		Aroostook County		Maine	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
White alone	99.1%	97.4%	97.0%	95.7%	96.9%	95.2%
Black or African American alone	0	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%	1.2%
Asian alone	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	0.4%	0.7%	1.0%
Other*	0.8%	2.2%	2.1%	3.3%	1.8%	2.6%

\*Other includes Native American alone, Native Hawaiian alone, some other race alone, or two or more races.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## ***Analyses***

### ***1). Is the rate of population change expected to continue as in the past, or to slow down or speed up? What are the implications of this change?***

Between 2020 and 2036, Island Falls' population is expected to continue to gradually decrease as it has since the early 1900s. The population is projected to decrease by approximately 0.5% per decade until 2036, a decrease of just 14 people over 17 years. The implications of this change are little to none. Despite these population projections, in the last two years, the community has observed an increase in year-round residents and school enrollments. Once available, 2020 Census data may reveal a shift in current population projections, given the unprecedented global pandemic and its impacts on population.

### ***2). What will be the likely demand for housing and municipal and school services to accommodate the change in population and demographics, both as a result of overall change as a result of change among different age groups?***

There is likely no change in demand for housing and municipal and school services to accommodate the change in population and demographics because no major change in population and demographics is expected. However, population and housing data from the 2020 Census may reveal otherwise.

### ***3). Does your community have a significant seasonal population, is the nature of that population changing? What is the community's dependence on seasonal visitors?***

The seasonal population of Island Falls does slightly increase as people populate homes and cottages that they own. Approximately one-third of the total housing units in Island Falls are seasonal housing units. The community depends on seasonal visitors to support its local businesses.

### ***4). If your community is a service center or has a major employer, are additional efforts required to serve a daytime population that is larger than its resident population?***

The Town of Island Falls is not a service center and has no major employer. No additional efforts are required to serve a daytime population that is larger than its resident population.

# HOUSING

## Goal

To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.

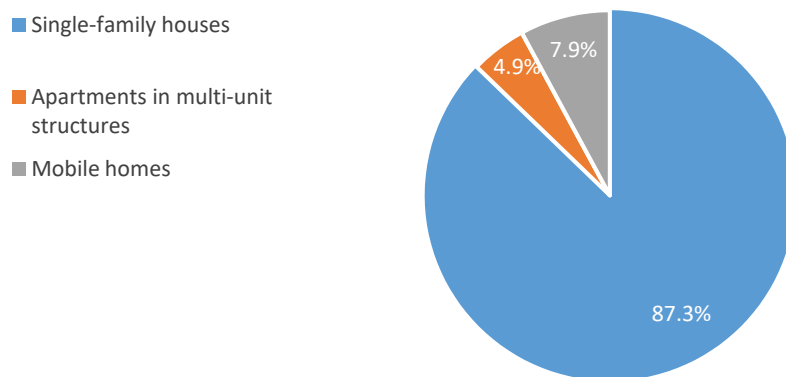
## Housing Stock

In 2000, Island Falls had 635 housing units. By 2010, the town added 20 more units, bringing the total to 655. As indicated in the pie chart below, approximately 87% of all housing units in Island Falls are single-family homes. Given this data, it is likely that the 20 housing units that were added to the town’s housing stock were single-family homes.

The second most common housing type is mobile homes, which represents about 8% of the town’s housing stock. Apartments in multi-unit structures represent about 5% of the town’s housing stock.

Compared to neighboring communities, Island Falls had the highest number of housing units in 2000 and 2010. Island Falls experienced 3% housing growth during this time period, exceeding the 2% growth Aroostook County experienced and falling short of the 10.7% growth that occurred in the state. Island Falls experienced a low percentage of housing growth compared to other municipalities, about 3%. During this time period, Island Falls’ housing growth was most similar to that of Aroostook County, which increased by 2%.

**Island Falls Housing Types 2018**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Regional Housing Growth 2000-2010

	2000	2010	Net Change	
<b>Island Falls</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
<b>Crystal</b>	134	147	13	9.7%
<b>Dyer Brook</b>	116	139	23	19.8%
<b>Linneus</b>	473	588	115	24.3%
<b>Sherman</b>	449	452	3	0.6%
<b>Stacyville</b>	226	224	-2	-0.8%
<b>Aroostook County</b>	<b>38,719</b>	<b>39,529</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>Maine</b>	<b>651,901</b>	<b>721,830</b>	<b>69,929</b>	<b>10.7%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### *Housing Occupancy*

Between 1990 and 2010, housing occupancy in Island Falls has remained relatively the same. Of the 637 total housing units in Island Falls in 1990, 55% were occupied and 45% were vacant. Despite an addition of 20 housing units between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of units that were occupied and vacant were also 55% and 45% as they were in 1990<sup>2</sup>. While Island Falls gained an additional 23 owner-occupied units between 2000 and 2010, the number of renter-occupied units declined by 12.

Over time, the number of seasonal and vacant units in Island Falls has increased. Between 2000 and 2010, Island Falls added 3 seasonal units to its housing stock. During the same time period, the town gained 9 additional vacant housing units. In both 2000 and 2010, seasonal housing accounted for 36% of the total housing units.

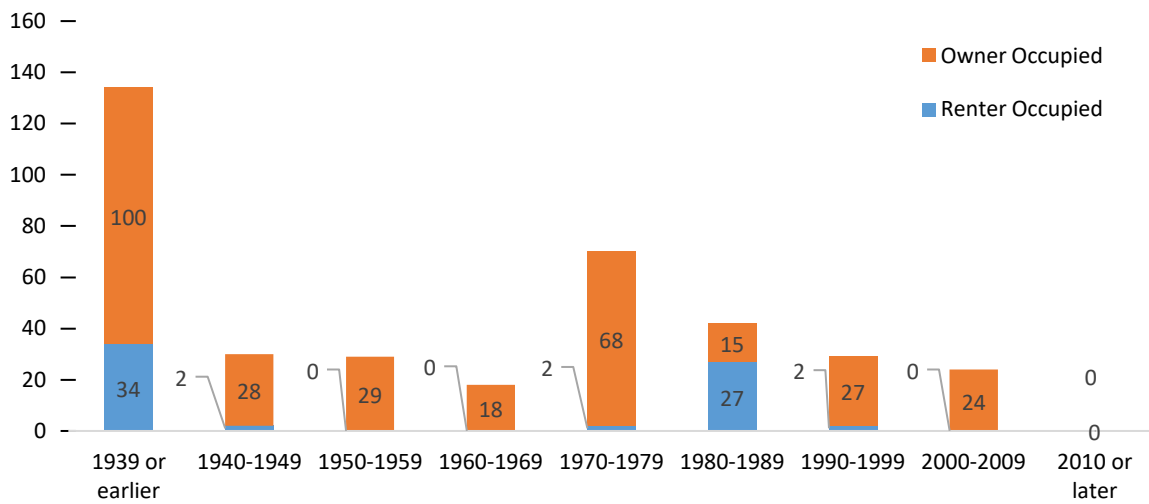
### Island Falls Housing Occupancy 2000-2010

	2000		2010	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	635		655	
<b>Occupied</b>	346	54%	357	55%
Owner	264	42%	287	44%
Renter	82	13%	70	11%
<b>Vacant</b>	289	46%	298	45%
Seasonal	231	36%	234	36%
<b>Vacancy Rate</b>		8%		6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

<sup>2</sup> Note: Once available, the 2020 Census results will reflect updated vacancy rates that will likely differ from the percentages discussed in this section.

## Island Falls Age of Housing by Tenure



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The majority of owner-occupied housing units in Island Falls are older and were built in 1939 or earlier. Few owner-occupied and renter-occupied units are new. Almost 80% of the housing units in town were built prior to 1980. Over 50% of renter-occupied housing units were built in 1939 or earlier and over 40% were built between 1980 and 1989. In the 1970s, there was an increase in new home construction – 68 housing units were built. The construction of renter-occupied units increased in the 1980s when 27 units were built.

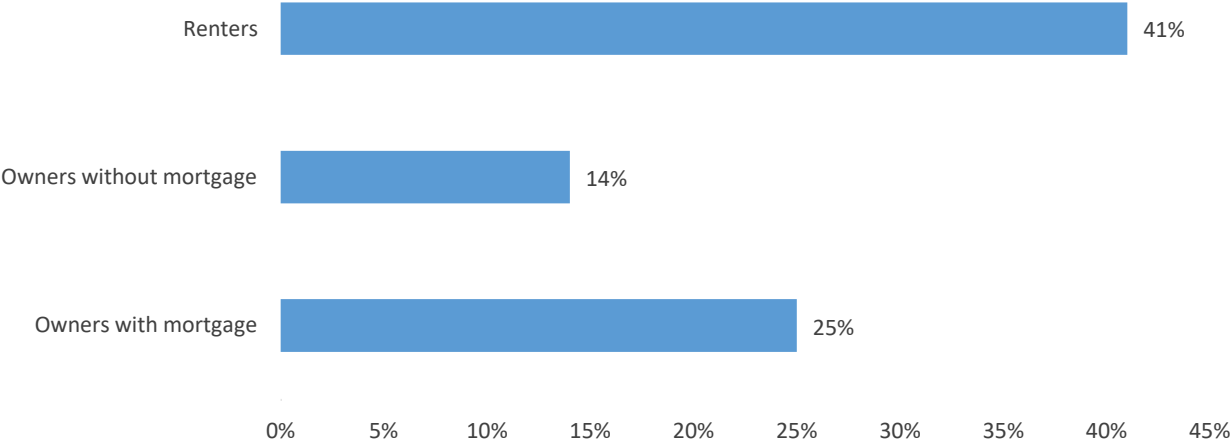
### ***Housing Affordability***

In the United States, housing affordability is determined by the percentage of an individual’s income spent on housing. As is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), cost-burdened households are households that spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs. In contrast, according to Maine State Housing Authority, affordable housing is defined as housing whose occupants allocate no more than 30% of their income for housing costs, including utilities.

As of 2018, various residents in Island Falls were cost-burdened when it came to their housing expenditures. Of the occupied housing units, 14% was occupied by renters. **Of the total number of renters in Island Falls, 41% were cost-burdened.** Owner-occupied housing units are inhabited by owners that have a mortgage and those that do not. Of the total population of owners without a mortgage, 14% are cost-burdened. In comparison, 25% of owners with a

mortgage were considered cost-burdened by their housing and utilities costs. Of the total percentage of occupants with a housing cost burden in Island Falls, 39% of homeowners are cost-burdened.

### Occupants with a Housing Cost Burden



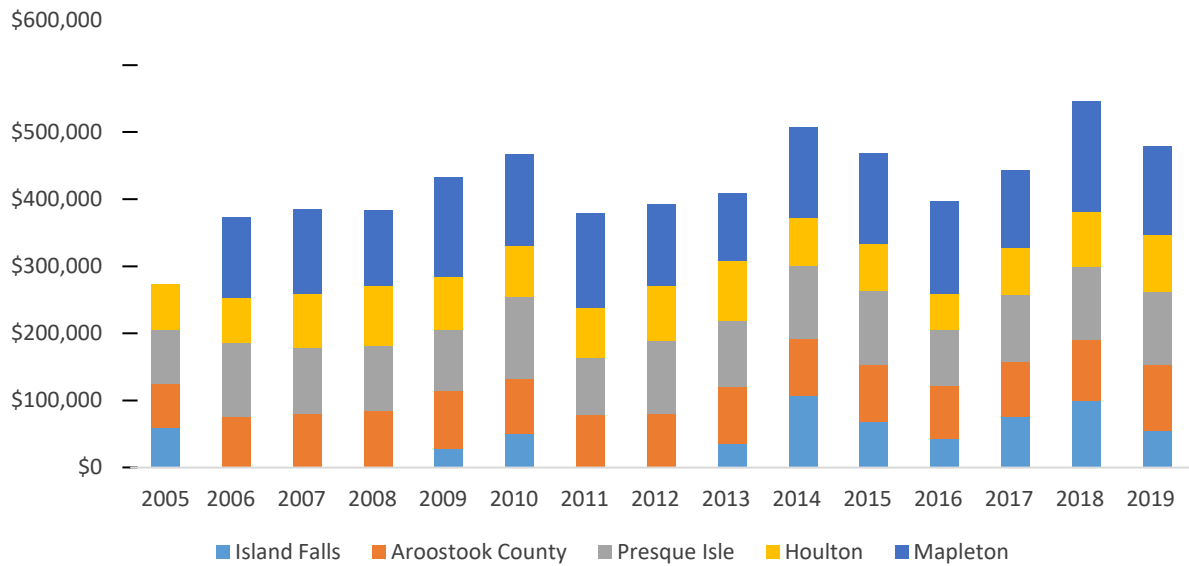
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Over time, Island Falls’ median home price has fluctuated. In 2005, the town’s median home price was \$58,200. Due to the recession, median home price declined to \$29,000 in 2009, before rising to \$50,000 in 2010. Following price spikes of \$108,000 in 2014 and \$100,000 in 2018, Island Falls’ median home price dropped to \$55,000 in 2019. With the exception of 2014 and 2018, Island Falls’ median home prices were lower than those in Aroostook County between 2005 and 2019. In comparison to nearby communities, median home prices in Island Falls were the lowest.

The Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) produces a Housing Affordability Index (HAI) that indicates the housing affordability of each U.S. zip code. On a scale of 1 to 251 or greater, from least affordable to most affordable, the 2017 Housing Affordability Index in Island Falls (04747) is estimated at 161. Compared to zip codes in neighboring communities, Island Falls is situated in a location that has a relatively fair supply of housing whose occupants spend no more than 30% of their income on costs associated with housing. Between 2005 and 2019, the median home price considered affordable at median income in Island Falls was consistently greater than the median home price indicating that affordable housing is accessible to those that earn median income. With the exception of 2014, when median home price exceeded home price considered affordable at median income, Island Falls’ home price considered affordable at median income exceeds median home price by \$58,582 on average. In 2013 and 2016, the differences between Island Falls’ median home price and Island Falls’ home price

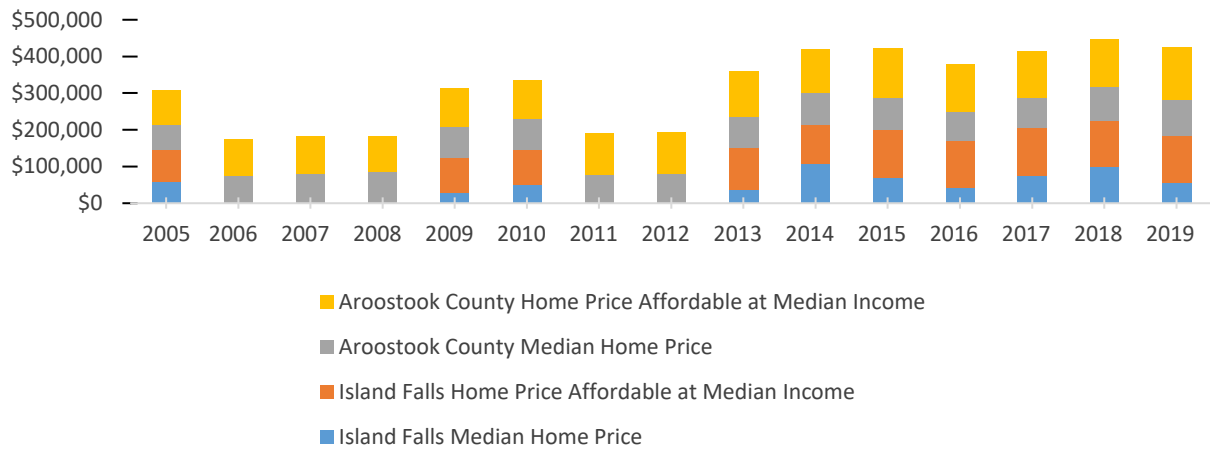
affordable at median income were the greatest, at \$81,514 and \$84,967 respectively.

### Comparison of Median Home Prices 2005-2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### Comparison of Median Home Price Affordable at Median Income 2005-2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Rental Affordability

In response to the growing population of renters and rental prices exceeding income growth since 2000, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) developed a rental affordability index. According to HUD, a renter household is one that earns median renter household income and a typical rental home is defined as a median-priced rental unit. As described by the Maine State Housing Authority, the rental affordability index is the ratio of 2-Bedroom Rent Affordable at Median Renter Income to Median 2-Bedroom Rent. An index of less than 1 indicates the area is primarily unaffordable. If the rental affordability index is greater than or equal to 100, the median income of renter households is just enough or more than enough to qualify for the median-priced rental unit.

Over time, rental housing in Aroostook County is becoming less affordable to residents earning median income. In 2010, the median income for renter households in Aroostook County was \$24,262. This data indicates that a typical renter household in Aroostook County could afford 92% of the typical monthly rent of \$657 in Aroostook County, or 74% of the typical rent if the household made 80% of the median income for renter households. A decade later, in 2020, the median income in Aroostook County increased by \$3,283 to \$27,545, while the typical rent also increased to \$824. As a result, the typical rental household could afford 84% of the typical rent in Aroostook County, or only 67% of the typical rent for rental households earning 80% of the median income. By comparison, the typical renter household in Maine was able to afford 83% of the typical rent in 2020, or 66% of the typical rent for renter households earning 80% of the median income. These statistics indicate that rental housing affordability in Aroostook County is similar to that of the State of Maine. While Aroostook County's rental housing affordability has decreased, rental housing that is affordable to the majority of Maine residents has also decreased.

### Housing Rental Affordability Comparison 2010-2020

	Aroostook County		Maine	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
<b>Median Rent (2 BR, with utilities)</b>	\$657	\$824	\$814	\$1,062
<b>Median Renter Household Income</b>	\$24,262	\$27,545	\$30,571	\$35,098
Affordable Monthly Rent	\$607	\$689	\$764	\$877
Rental Affordability Index	0.92	0.84	0.94	0.83
		\$		
<b>80% Median Household Income</b>	\$19,410	22,036	\$24,457	\$28,078
Affordable Monthly Rent	\$486	\$551	\$611	\$702
Rental Affordability Index	0.74	0.67	0.75	0.66

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



## **Analyses**

### **1). How many additional housing units (if any), including rental units, will be necessary to accommodate projected population and demographic changes during the planning period?**

According to population projections, the population of Island Falls is expected to decrease by about 0.5% per decade until 2036, a decrease of just 14 people over 17 years. As a result, additional housing units to accommodate the projected population are not a pressing community concern. In a community-wide survey, a considerable number of respondents indicated that they'd like to see more affordable housing and assisted living/nursing homes in Island Falls. The comprehensive planning committee will continue to review and assess these issues on an annual basis following the adoption of the comprehensive plan.

### **2). Are seasonal homes being converted to year-round use or vice-versa? What impact does this have on the community?**

Yes, seasonal homes are being converted to year-round use and vice versa. A number of homes on Mattawamkeag Lake and Pleasant Pond that used to be seasonal are now being converted into year-round housing. On average, 15 housing permits and seasonal conversion permits are issued to shorefront property owners. An increase in year-round residents boosts the local economy and supports local spending. For locals, the affordability of homes on lake shorefronts has decreased over time as seasonal residents sell their shorefront homes for increasingly high prices. In recent years, the community has observed an increase in residential home sales and home improvement projects across the existing local housing stock.

### **3). Will additional low- and moderate-income family, senior, or assisted living housing be necessary to meet projected needs for the community? Will these needs be met locally or regionally?**

Between 2000 and 2018, the 65-84 age group and 85 or older age group were the fastest growing age groups in Island Falls. In 2018, the 65-84 age group was the most dominant age group, representing about 35% of the community. If, in the future, assisted living and senior housing, including low- and moderate-income housing is inadequate, Island Falls will work with appropriate entities to satisfy any needed housing.

### **4). Are there other major housing issues in the community, such as substandard housing?**

Currently there are currently no major housing issues. Where substandard housing is apparent, the Code Enforcement Officer addresses and resolves these problems. In 2018,

Aroostook County had 214 housing units that lacked kitchen facilities and 188 housing units that lacked complete plumbing facilities.

***5). How do existing local regulations encourage or discourage the development of affordable/workforce housing?***

The recent update of Island Falls' Land Use Ordinance and the approval of the Comprehensive Plan will involve conversations surrounding local regulations related to various types of housing development, including affordable and workforce housing. There are currently no regulations that discourage the development of affordable and workforce housing in town.

***Conditions and Trends***

***1). Information on existing local and regional affordable/workforce housing conditions or similar efforts.***

Island Falls works with Eastern Maine Development Corporation and Northern Maine Development Commission, organizations that provide community, business, and workforce development services (EMDC only) to select counties. The community also works with other local, regional, and state entities that provide valuable assistance to the community.

***2). A summary of local regulations that affect the development of affordable/workforce housing.***

The Code Enforcement Officer, Planning Board, Selectmen, and Town Manager regularly enforce regulations, making updates as needed. Examples of regulation updates include the amendment of laws in the Land Use Ordinance, which is currently being updated and Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, which last updated in 2013. These local entities work in conjunction to identify and promote housing needs as well as any other community issues that may arise. In order to support future commercial and residential development, a new public sewer system needs to be at the forefront of local priorities.

## ***Policies***

- (1) To encourage and promote adequate workforce housing to support the community's and region's economic development.
- (2) To ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including rental housing.
- (3) To encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.
- (4) To encourage the support for major infrastructure changes such as high-speed broadband and a public wastewater treatment facility.

## ***Strategies***

- (1) Enact growth area land use regulations to increase density, decrease lot size, setbacks and road widths, or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing.
- (2) Amend ordinances to allow the addition of at least one accessory apartment per dwelling unit in growth areas, subject to site suitability.
- (3) Create a community affordable/workforce housing committee and/or regional affordable housing coalition.
- (4) Designate a location(s) in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3)(M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2).
- (5) Support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.
- (6) Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable.

# TRANSPORTATION

## **Goal**

To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

## **Importance of Mobility**

In order to sufficiently connect people to their daily needs including education, healthcare, food, and job opportunities, reliable transportation is essential, particularly in a rural setting like Island Falls. Without access to transportation, residents' participation in the local and regional economies is limited. While the majority of local residents rely on private vehicles to access their daily needs, continual monitoring of any transportation challenges that may arise will be key to ensuring long-term community prosperity. When it comes to transportation infrastructure, regularly assessing opportunities for the enhanced connectivity of people to local trails, businesses, and the downtown area will advance both community and economic development.

## **Analyses**

### ***1). What are the transportation system concerns in the community and region? What, if any, plans exist to address these concerns?***

A concern is the lack of bus service for the municipality's seniors and Amish community. A regular service to Patten and Houlton would be convenient. Bus service from Sherman is available, but not easily accessible. An Uber-type service may be successful, however, there are currently no plans to address these issues.

As the State of Maine embraces renewable energy, increasing the number of electric vehicle charging stations will be crucial. Island Falls is well positioned along Interstate 95 to provide a place for travelers to stop and recharge an electric vehicle. Northern Maine Development Commission is currently working on a strategy to support the future increase of electric vehicles in northern Maine communities.

### ***2). Are conflicts caused by multiple road uses, such as a major state or U.S. route that passes through the community or its downtown and serves as a local service road as well?***

Two major routes, U.S. Route 2 – classified as a Major Collector – and State Route 159 pass through the downtown area, neither of which create a traffic concern. However, traffic and

speed have been concerns in the past when Interstate 95 was closed due to construction. This emphasizes the significance of these routes and the connections they create between municipalities in the Katahdin Region. The community's close proximity to Interstate 95 increases opportunities for tourism and provides local residents with a convenient connection to jobs, healthcare, education, and more. To support both residents and visitors, the community's downtown area needs additional public parking as well as better signage to identify where public parking is available.

**3). *To what extent do sidewalks connect residential areas with schools, neighborhood shopping areas, and other daily destinations?***

Island Falls is a walkable, pedestrian-friendly town. To continue to support this, town sidewalks need an upgrade. In a recent report, the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) proposed a project that would connect sidewalks to local trails. This would link individuals participating in outdoor recreation activities to local businesses, which would foster local spending and ultimately, increase the town's economic vibrancy.

**4). *How are walking and bicycling integrated into the community's transportation network (including access to schools, parks, and other community destinations)?***

Federal Bicycle Route 501, a trail that begins in Bangor in Penobscot County and ends at the Dickey Bridge in Allagash in Aroostook County is located on Route 159 and Route 2 in Island Falls. The trail also connects to two scenic byways, the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument and the St. John Valley Cultural Byway. In addition, there are countless miles of gravel roads for bicycles to use. Traffic on paved roads is usually light, making bike trips from Island Falls to Sherman and Patten quite enjoyable.

**5). *How do state and regional transportation plans relate to your community?***

At the regional level, Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC) administers a Regional Transportation Program that offers municipalities in Aroostook and Washington counties with transportation planning assistance and technical support.

To enhance the program and the services it provides, NMDC partners with a number of entities including MaineDOT, Maine Better Transportation Association, Aroostook Regional Transportation System, Inc., and the Federal Highway Administration.

**6). *What is the community's current and approximate future budget for road maintenance and improvement?***

The town currently expends approximately \$150,000 on road maintenance on an annual basis and plans to continue to prioritize maintenance according to need. This is Island Falls' single largest discretionary budget item. The community has a 5/10/15/20

Roads Repair Plan which assists the town in directing their annual expenditure of funds that generally range between \$75,000 and \$100,000 unless a large repair or project is planned. In 2021, the budget was adjusted to \$275,000 to accommodate a major road improvement. Road sand and salt is stored in a “salt shed” at the outskirts of town near the septage site at the end of Sewall Street.

**7). Are there parking issues in the community? If so, what are they?**

There does not appear to be a parking problem in the town except near the post office and bank. However, currently, there are few businesses. More parking areas will need to be developed if business improves on Main Street. One suggestion is to remove abandoned buildings and utilize the lots. Parking is not really an issue except during special events. The municipal lot and grocery store lot (across the street) are adequate to meet current parking needs.

**8). If there are parking standards, do they discourage development in village or downtown areas?**

Parking is available along the streets, as identified in the Traffic Control and Parking Ordinance. Businesses (bank, post office, grocery store, law office) have their own parking lots. The Municipal Building, located in the center of town, has a large lot where parking is available. Currently, there are no curb cuts for handicap accessibility. However, sidewalks are ramped for access. Island Falls’ sidewalks and crossings are not Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliant. Downtown revitalization projects would provide a good opportunity to work with MaineDOT to achieve compliance. There is a Winter Parking Ordinance that is in effect from November 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>. Individuals may park a vehicle on any street for up to 30 minutes only between the hours of 9:00pm to 6:00am. The winter parking restrictions may be extended if decided upon by the Board of Selectmen.

**9). Do available transit services meet the current and foreseeable needs of community residents? If transit services are not adequate, how will the community address the needs?**

Currently, there are few transit services available to residents of Island Falls, although demand for them is low. Aroostook Regional Transportation System offers an on-call transit service each week on Thursdays that travels to Houlton and back. Discounted rides are available for qualifying residents. There are currently no local taxi services, although a ride service like Uber may be desirable. The local school district provides transportation for school-aged children. Most residents use private vehicles to meet their needs. As demand for additional transit services is low, the current accommodations meet the needs of residents for the present and foreseeable future.

**10). If the community hosts a transportation terminal, such as an airport, passenger rail station, or ferry terminal, how does it connect to other transportation modes (e.g. automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, transit)?**

Currently, the Town of Island Falls does not host a transportation terminal.

**11). If the community hosts or abuts any public airports, what coordination has been undertaken to ensure that required airspace is protected now and in the future? How does the community coordinate with the owner(s) of private airports?**

Currently, the Town of Island Falls does not abut any public airport. The nearest airport, Houlton International Airport, is located thirty miles away on I-95 North in Houlton. The largest commercial airport, Bangor International Airport, is located ninety miles away on I-95 South in Bangor.

**12). If you are a coastal community are land-side or water-side transportation facilities needed? How will the community address these needs?**

Island Falls is not a coastal community, although there are various lakes and ponds within the municipality. The nearest coast is over two hours away, east of Island Falls.

**13). Does the community have local access management or traffic permitting measures in place?**

The Planning Board reviews all building permits and ensures that proper access to existing roadways is prioritized in the process.

**14). Do the local road design standards support the community's desired land use pattern?**

Local road design supports Island Falls' desired land use pattern to be interconnected and promote a cohesive community. Roads are well maintained as they are brushed frequently and there is an aggressive plowing system in the winter months. In the last five years, many local roads have been repaved and repaired. The town's Roads Maintenance Plan, developed by the Roads Committee, provides direction on the allocation of transportation funds based on where repairs need to be made.

**15). Do the local road design standards support bicycle and pedestrian transportation?**

Sidewalks in the downtown area support pedestrian traffic. There are currently no local road design standards that support bicycle transportation.

**16). Do planned or recently built subdivision roads (residential or commercial) simply dead-end or do they allow for expansion to adjacent land and encourage the creation of a network of local streets? Where dead-ends are unavoidable, are mechanisms in place to encourage shorter dead-ends resulting in compact and efficient subdivision designs?**

Although there are few subdivisions in Island Falls, town roads are interconnected and allow for expansion to adjacent land when possible. The town wants to re-implement the original land use plan that encouraged the interconnection of roads. Within Island Falls, there are various opportunities for road extensions which would increase the interconnectedness of the community, one of which is on Pleasant Street.

## **Conditions and Trends**

**1). Location and overall condition of roads, bridges, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities, including any identified deficiencies or concerns.**

In the community survey, respondents were asked to rank the overall condition of Island Falls' roads and shoulders, bridges, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and signage. On a numeric scale of 1 to 5, "1" being "Poor" and "5" being "Excellent", 45% of online respondents ranked the overall condition of Island Falls' roads and shoulders, bridges, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and signage with a "3." Approximately 26% of survey respondents ranked the community's transportation infrastructure with a "3", followed by 21% that indicated "2" and approximately 7% that indicated "1." None of the survey respondents ranked the transportation infrastructure as "5", "Excellent." These results indicate that the condition of transportation infrastructure in Island Falls may not be a pressing issue to residents presently but may need to be focused on in the future.

There are 4 bridges in Island Falls, two of which are located on the major highways – Route 2 and Route 159. One bridge located on Old Patten Road over Fish Stream is discontinued. Another bridge has recently been rebuilt on Old Patten Road over Mattawamkeag River. The town does not currently have any bicycle facilities. The town's existing sidewalks in the downtown area are in need of an upgrade.

**2). Identify potential on and off-road connections that would provide bicycle and pedestrian connections to neighborhoods, schools, waterfronts and other activity centers.**

There are a number of walking trails being developed in town, one of which will begin right across from GR Porter and Sons' Garage and continue along Sly Brook and the Mattawamkeag River. Another future trail, "Hathaway Path", will connect Mattawamkeag Lake to Pleasant Pond. Additionally, there has been discussion about creating a path for fat bike use, which would protect the conditions of pedestrian trails.



**3). Identify major traffic (including pedestrian) generators, such as schools, large businesses, public gathering areas/activities, etc. and related hours of their operations.**

Significant traffic generators in Island Falls are from the local Post Office, Town Office, Katahdin Public Library, Katahdin Trust Company, and Jerry’s Thriftway, all of which primarily have traditional business hours, Monday through Friday. Despite the current availability of parking, the downtown area would benefit from additional parking due to the traffic generated by these businesses. Additional parking would support residents and visitors alike when visiting these businesses and others.

**4). List and locate municipal parking areas including capacity, and usage.**

<b>Municipal Parking Location</b>	<b>Capacity (# of vehicles)</b>	<b>Usage</b>
Island Falls Town Office	70	Frequent
Island Falls Post Office	15	Frequent
Katahdin Public Library	8	Frequent

**5). Identify policies and standards for the design, construction and maintenance of public and private roads.**

For the past decade, a Road Surface Management System (RSMS) has been used to maintain Island Falls’ public roads. Every spring, the town’s Roads Committee submits a maintenance plan which describes the location and maintenance need of roadways. The Committee meets on a regular basis to ensure the information in the plan is routinely updated. In regard to the town’s private camp roads, it is important to note that they are privately maintained through the respective “roads associations.”

The following policies for the design and construction of roads in relation to development projects are described in the municipality’s Land Use Ordinance, last updated in June 2021:

- All development plans shall incorporate building designs and road layouts that fit and utilize existing topography and desirable natural surroundings to the fullest extent possible.
- The proposed development shall not have an unreasonable adverse impact on the public road system, and shall assure safe interior circulation within its site, by separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic and by providing adequate off-road parking and turn-around areas.
- Creation of the right-of-way to serve a rear lot shall not create a non-conforming front lot by reducing such lot’s required road frontage below the minimum, or, if the front lot is already non-conforming with respect to road frontage, reduce its road frontage at all.

- No building permit shall be issued before the road upon which the lot fronts is completed in accordance with this Ordinance up to and including the entire frontage of the lot.

**6. *Identify airports within or adjacent to the community and describe applicable airport zoning and airspace protection ordinances your community has in place.***

The nearest airport to Island Falls is Houlton International Airport, located 30 miles away on I-95 North in Houlton. Presently, there are no airport zoning ordinances or airspace protection ordinances in Island Falls.

**7). *Identify bus or van services.***

Aroostook Regional Transportation System offers an on-call transit service to Island Falls' residents on a weekly basis on Thursdays that travels to Houlton and back. Discounted rides are available for qualifying residents.

**8. *Identify existing and proposed marine and rail terminals within your community including potential expansions.***

From 1893 to 1894, a railroad was constructed that ran through Island Falls.<sup>3</sup> The Bangor and Aroostook Railroad (BAR) also served the area until the early 2000s. Today, an active rail line owned by the State of Maine and operated by Maine Northern Railway Company runs through town.

**9. *If coastal communities identify public ferry service and private boat transportation support facilities (may be covered under Marine Resources with cross reference) including related water-side (docks/piers/wharves) and land-side (parking) facilities.***

Island Falls is located inland. The community is bordered by the Town of Dyer Brook to the north, the Town of Sherman to the south, the Town of Crystal to the west, and the Town of Linneus to the east.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.islandfallsme.us/vertical/sites/%7B22C70384-7073-450B-957A-33378347F000%7D/uploads/History\\_.pdf](https://www.islandfallsme.us/vertical/sites/%7B22C70384-7073-450B-957A-33378347F000%7D/uploads/History_.pdf)  
Accessed February 9th, 2021

## Maine DOT 2021-2023 Planned Capital and Maintenance Work

Road	Year	Location	Project	Amount
<b>Route 159/ Route 2</b>	2021	Beginning at Route 2 and extending west 1.51 miles.	Highway Paving, Light Capital Paving	\$64,000
<b>Interstate 95 Southbound</b>	2022/2023	Various bridge joint improvements on bridges (No.6176, No. 6177, No. 6178) on Interstate 95 southbound in Island Falls.	Highway-Bridges, Bridge Joint Replacement	\$400,000
<b>Belvedere Road</b>	2022/2023	Belvedere Road/I-95 Bridge (No.6174) over Interstate 95. Located 0.63 of a mile northwest of Sherman Street.	Highway-Bridges, Bridge Painting	\$750,000
<b>Route 159</b>	2022/2023	Route 159/I-95 Bridge (No. 6175) over Interstate 95. Located 0.64 of a mile east of Old Patten Road.	Highway-Bridges, Bridge Painting	\$700,000

Source: MaineDOT.

The table above describes the Work Plan entries for Island Falls, as administered by the Maine Department of Transportation. The Work Plan identifies the project location, scope of work, year, and estimated funding to complete the listed capital improvements. For Fiscal Year 2021, estimated funding for local road assistance is \$14,712.<sup>4</sup>

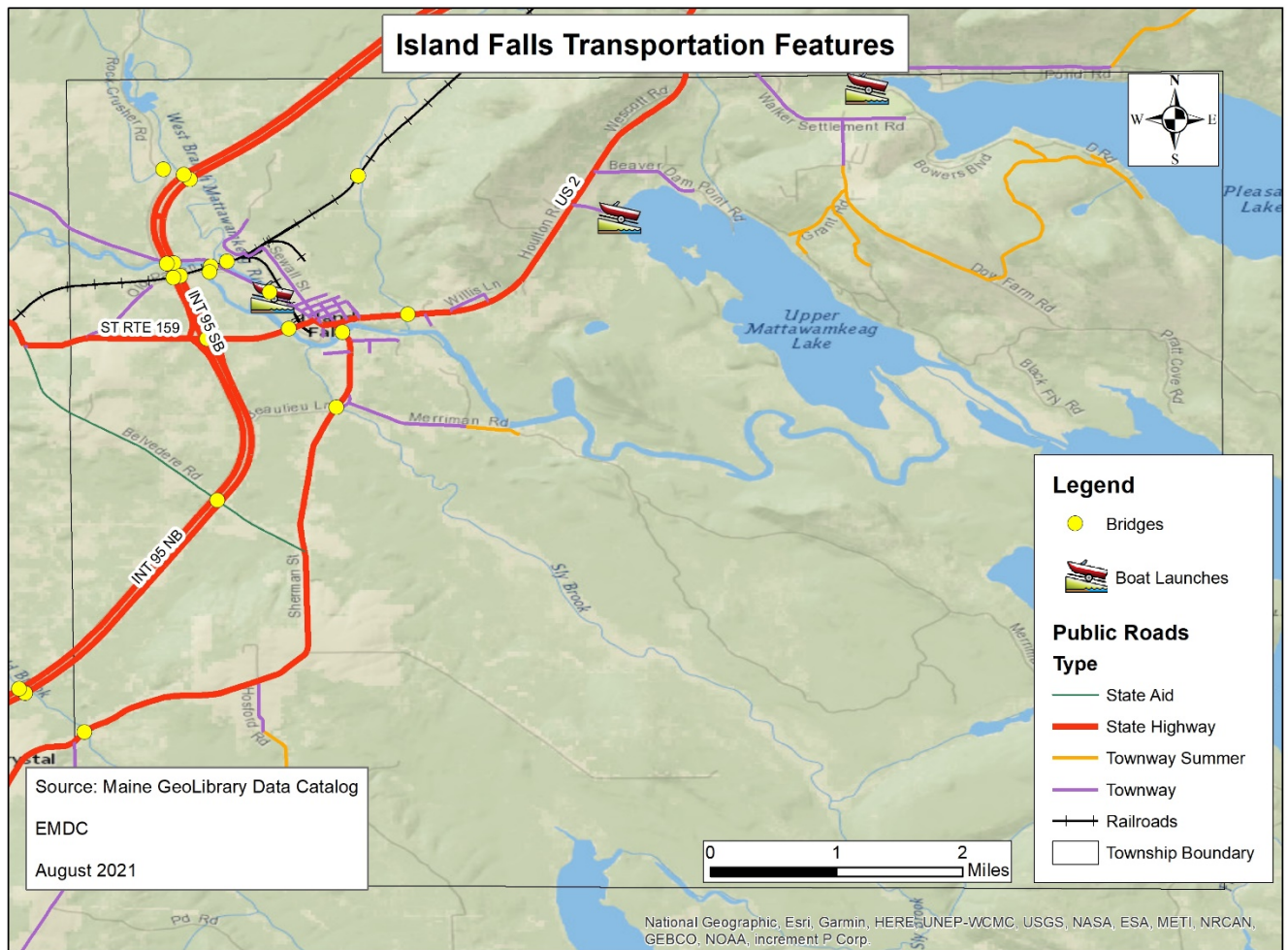
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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/workplan/data/workplan/town/IslandFalls.pdf> Accessed February 9th, 2021.

	<b>Selected Vehicle Traffic Counts in Island Falls</b>					<b>% Change 2009- 2018</b>
	<b>Annual Average Daily Traffic Count</b>					
	<i>2009</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2018</i>	
<b>Bog Brook Road</b> <i>West of Rock Crusher Road</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	131	N/A	N/A
<b>Interstate 95 Northbound</b> <i>North of on-ramp to Route 159</i>	1,951	2,247	N/A	2,106	N/A	N/A
<b>Interstate 95 Southbound</b> <i>North of off-ramp to Route 159</i>	2,146	2,417	N/A	2,323	2,451	14%
<b>Route 159</b> <i>At Mattawamkeag River</i>	1,893	N/A	1,994	1,522	1,657	-12%
<b>Route 159</b> <i>Northwest of Sewall Street</i>	2,214	N/A	2,118	1,512	1,676	-24%
<b>Route 159</b> <i>Southwest of Library Street</i>	2,458	N/A	2,370	1,607	1,762	-28%
<b>Library Street</b> <i>Northwest of Route 159</i>	480	N/A	274	218	276	-46%
<b>David Street</b> <i>Northwest of Route 2</i>	252	N/A	155	164	220	-13%
<b>Sewall Street</b> <i>North of Route 159</i>	200	N/A	216	127	158	-21%
<b>Route 2</b> <i>South of High Street</i>	1,112	N/A	948	814	882	-21%
<b>Route 2</b> <i>Southeast of Route 159</i>	1,442	N/A	1,330	998	1,057	-27%
<b>Route 2</b>	1,523	N/A	1,390	N/A	1,237	-19%

Source: MaineDOT.

Above, vehicle traffic counts conducted between 2009 and 2018 on selected roads indicate that over time, vehicle traffic in Island Falls has decreased.



In the map above, the location of transportation features including bridges, town roads, railroads, and state highways are marked. Boat launches and town roads accessible in the summer months represent seasonal transportation features.

## ***Policies***

- 1). To prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.
- 2). To safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.
- 3). To promote public health, protect natural and cultural resources, and enhance livability by managing land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transportation system and minimize increases in vehicle miles traveled.
- 4). To meet the diverse transportation needs of residents (including children, the elderly and disabled) and through travelers by providing a safe, efficient, and adequate transportation network for all types of users (motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists).
- 5). To promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.

## ***Strategies***

- 1). Continue to update a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network.
- 2). Actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.
- 3). Amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:
  - a. Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73);
  - b. State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and
  - c. State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.
- 4). Amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.

# ECONOMY

## Goal

Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.

## Reaching Economic Prosperity

When planning for future growth, a focus on economic development is crucial. Island Falls' commitment to prioritizing the revitalization of the downtown area, expansion of trails, and survival of local businesses, contributes to economic development in the community and Katahdin region. Through involvement in regional planning processes like NMDC's *2018-2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* (CEDS) and the Katahdin Collaborative's *Katahdin Gazetteer: A Roadmap to the Future*, Island Falls creates a vision for local economic development and realizes the significant role that rural small towns play in the greater regional economy. A community-driven Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) leads local efforts for strengthening business development, increasing local spending, creating jobs, and attracting both residents and visitors to town. The continuation of community-led initiatives to enhance economic development is key to creating and sustaining growth for the present and future population.

## Analyses

### **1). Is the economy experiencing significant change, and how does this, or might this, affect the local population, employment, and municipal tax base?**

The economic development of the community is best expressed in the community's vision "to grow into modern times". Using the *Katahdin Gazetteer: A Roadmap to the Future* as a guide, the town has initiated several projects in line with the six objectives outlined in this document, completed in 2019 by the Katahdin Collaborative.<sup>5</sup>

- a. "Foster vibrant villages that enhance the region." To accomplish this goal the community has proposed a community sewer system that would permit service businesses like restaurants, motels, barber shops, laundromats, etc. to develop. This project would also enable use of abandoned buildings for small businesses or multifamily dwellings.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://katahdincollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/AllInKatahdin\\_VisionActionReport\\_Digital.pdf](https://katahdincollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/AllInKatahdin_VisionActionReport_Digital.pdf) Accessed February 9th, 2021.

- b. “Make Island Falls a premier 4-season outdoor destination.” To accomplish this goal the community has proposed:
  - i. Development of the iconic island namesake as a park
  - ii. Raising the water level of Mattawamkeag Lake by reinstalling the roll dam
  - iii. Studying the water quality of Mattawamkeag Lake with Unity College to improve water quality and reduce siltation, algae growth, and invasive aquatic plant
  - iv. New walking and hiking trails to highlight the beauty of the area
- c. “Be a place that supports and attracts people of all ages.” To accomplish this goal, outdoor recreational opportunities must be protected – 4-wheeling, snow sledding (snowmobiling), hunting, fishing, boating, canoeing, golf, hiking, etc. A broadband system is also needed to attract the younger generation.
- d. “Cultivate jobs and a new regional economy.” To accomplish this goal, the sewer system and broadband are essential.
- e. “Grow the next wave of forest products manufacturing.” Accomplishment of this goal is unclear in the evolving economy. Most likely it will be in the form of wood building materials, however, other manufacturing opportunities should emerge. The Starch Factory site, as well as a large land base for business construction, nearness to the I-95 corridor and rail availability – make the town well positioned for new manufacturing projects.
- f. “Future proof the region.” The town cannot depend on one large industry. Broadband will help capitalize on the new “work from home” movement. Recreation will grow into support businesses – snow sled repair, boat motor repair, fishing tackle and bait sells, hunting supplies, camping supplies, etc. will keep the business population diversified. The area is also prime for an agricultural-based industry as well as forest products.

***2). Does the community have defined priorities for economic development? Are these priorities reflected in regional economic development plans?***

The *Katahdin Gazetteer*, a document that serves as a guide for the future of the Katahdin Region, identifies six objectives that Island Falls plans to implement. As mentioned above, the six primary objectives of the Gazetteer are to (1) Foster vibrant villages that enhance the region, (2) Make the Katahdin region the premier four-season outdoor destination in New England, (3) Be a place that supports and attracts people of all ages, (4) Cultivate jobs and a new regional economy, (5) Grow the next wave of forest products manufacturing, and (6) Future-proof the region. In recent years, Island Falls has established an Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC). In 2020, the committee finalized its Economic



Development Plan for the town, its mission statement being to “serve the citizens, property owners, local businesses and visitors of the Town of Island Falls through inclusive governance.” A vision statement was also created. It reads: “An Historic Community Growing into Modern Times.” The Economic Development Plan’s contents consisted of the identification of community assets and challenges, economic growth opportunities, industrial and agricultural opportunities, developmental goals, and a 12-month Action Plan.<sup>6</sup> Information gathered from online research and two listening sessions with local non-profit organizations, local business leaders and summer residents contributed to the Plan’s contents.

The Economic Development Plan identifies five developmental goals:

1. Preserve our community’s distinctive heritage and unique lifestyle;
2. To be a premier 4 season outdoor destination, ensuring public access to recreational sites, while protecting critical natural resources and waterway ecosystems;
3. Build and promote a sustainable economy that supports residents and visitors;
4. Plan for orderly sustainable growth and development;
5. Maintain a well-run and efficient government that provides high quality and cost-effective services.

***3). Is there a traditional downtown or village center(s) in the community? If so, are they deteriorating or thriving?***

Island Falls has a deteriorating downtown area populated with a few small businesses. It is without question that the number of local businesses has declined in recent years. The Starch Factory and Renee’s Gift Shop are the most noticed. However, a review of the local business history reveals this is a long-standing trend. The challenge is to identify the next opportunity and be prepared to embrace it. In a survey distributed to the community, when asked to give their overall impression of Island Falls, results indicated that 88% of respondents would describe the town as “tired” or “dying.” A small percentage of respondents described Island Falls as “Stable.”

***4). Is tourism an important part of the local economy? If so, what steps has the community taken to support this industry?***

In Island Falls, tourism is a significant part of the local economy. Vacation Land Estates (VLE) time shares are designed for tourists.

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<sup>6</sup> EDAC. Economic Development Advisory Committee.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/pcptng1jupu862u/2020%20EDAC%20Economic%20Development%20Plan.pdf?dl=0> Accessed October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Birch Point on Pleasant Pond (also known as Pleasant Lake) offers cabins and camping as well as a restaurant and bowling. The pond's crystal-clear water is excellent for swimming, fishing, canoeing, paddle boarding, kayaking, water skiing, and boating. Va-Jo-Wa Golf Course borders the Pond with an additional restaurant. The many dirt roads offer excellent 4-wheeling opportunities during the summer and there are several groomed snow sled trails for winter. The seasonal population makes the businesses that support it depend on the "summer surge" for support (Va-Jo-Wa Golf Course, Birch Point, Vacation Land Estates (VLE)). During the summer, the population of Island Falls nearly doubles creating an opportunity for more seasonal businesses to develop. Island Falls' Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) has identified potential opportunities for recreational guiding, additional restaurants, and a farmer's market, gift shop, motel, bakery, cleaning service, and fuel/convenience store service center. A lack of contracting businesses contributes to the growing demand for plumbers, carpenters, and electricians.

On an annual basis, lakes generate 3.5 billion dollars for Maine's economy. Island Falls' lakes and ponds and the outdoor recreation opportunities in and around them puts the town in a position to attract tourists and boost local spending, strengthening the area's economy. While increased tourism brings many benefits to a municipality, special consideration should be given to the natural resources that will be impacted by increased activity on local trails and waterbodies.

***5). Do/should home occupations play a role in the community?***

There are numerous individuals that operate businesses from their homes. Some local home-based occupations include crafters, quilters, farmers, accountants, tutors, music instructors, bakers, a potter, and those offering small appliance repairs.

***6). Are there appropriate areas within the community for industrial or commercial development? If so, are performance standards necessary to assure that industrial and commercial development is compatible with the surrounding land uses and landscape?***

As mentioned above, there are definitely areas available for industrial and commercial development. The former Starch Factory site covers nine acres and has substantial building facilities in place. There are also large areas of undeveloped properties on the outskirts of the residential neighborhoods. A town ordinance has been approved regulating scrap metal facilities, abandoned vehicles, junkyards and trash. A Land Use Ordinance for the downtown area is in the process of being developed.

**7). Are public facilities, including sewer, water, broadband access or three-phase power, needed to support the projected location, type, and amount of economic activity, and what are the issues involved in providing them?**

Currently the only public facilities the community has are water and three-phase power. A feasibility study for a sewer system has been completed. Unfortunately, town residents did not approve the continuation of the project without guaranteed financial support.

Broadband is being studied at the regional level, but fiber optic cable is an unlikely option for the Pond/Lake or agricultural communities without significant funding. A better option may be a high-speed wireless system. User costs will have to be reasonable in order to attract new residents and businesses.

**8). If there are local or regional economic development incentives such as TIF districting, do they encourage development in growth areas?**

TIF districting may be used to encourage and/or attract development to growth areas in Island Falls. Technical assistance with TIF districting applications is available through Northern Maine Development Commission. A TIF district is finalized following approval by community residents and the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD).

**9). How can/does the community use its unique assets such as recreational opportunities, historic architecture, civic events, etc. for economic growth?**

Island Falls has various unique assets including historic architecture, recreational opportunities, and annual civic events. Bible Point State Historic Site, located at the confluence of the West Branch Mattawamkeag River and First Brook is an area of historical significance. In 1878, Theodore Roosevelt visited Island Falls, accompanied by William Sewall, a local guide. During his first of two visits to the town, Sewall and Roosevelt explored a wooded area in close proximity to the West Branch Mattawamkeag River, where Roosevelt often went to read his Bible. Since then, that area has been referred to as “Bible Point.”<sup>7</sup> Town buildings of historical significance consist of the Jail House, Tingley House, and William Sewall House, which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Various year-round recreational opportunities are available to Island Falls residents. From snow sledding and ice fishing in winter months, to swimming, fishing, four wheeling, and boating in summer months, there is no shortage of outdoor activities. The next opportunity for Island Falls is to take advantage of its natural beauty and to promote outdoor recreation.

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/discover\\_history\\_explore\\_nature/history/bible\\_point/history.shtml](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/discover_history_explore_nature/history/bible_point/history.shtml) Accessed February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Civic events hosted by town groups boost community engagement and encourage economic growth. Each year, the Island Falls Historical Society hosts a Christmas Cookie Sale whose proceeds go to funding the Society's historical protection initiatives. The Island Falls Recreation Department holds a "Share the Love" event, where community members are encouraged to donate toys and Christmas items to make it possible for children to shop for Christmas presents for their relatives. Each February, the town hosts Winterfest, an event that involves an ice fishing derby, bonfire, winter carnival for kids, kids' parade, and torch run. In late summer, Island Falls hosts Summerfest, where community members enjoy a fireworks display, duck race, antique tractor pulls and other fun activities. The Island Falls Lakes Association, 100% volunteer organization holds various annual events including a Summer Fishing Derby, Photo Contest, Canoe/Kayak Race, Lobster and Steak Dinner and a Paddle on Mattawamkeag Lake.

## ***Conditions and Trends***

### ***1). A brief historical perspective on how and why the current economy of the community and region developed.***

In 1872, the Town of Island Falls was incorporated. Historically, the town was a small homestead community comprised of family farms and woods workers. During this time, logging was a significant industry in the community. Mattawamkeag River and its flowage to the Penobscot River was ideal for log transport to mills in Bangor. In the 1890s, the construction of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad made the town more accessible and led to a population increase. The significant amounts of hemlock and other wood species contributed to the rise of two significant industries – the Proctor, Hunt, and Company Tannery in New England and the Shaw and Morse steam-powered saw mill. As Island Falls' population grew, the downtown area expanded to include various businesses such as a hotel, blacksmith shop, and jewelry shop. Town infrastructure also expanded when the Katahdin Farmers Telephone Company, Island Falls Water Company, and Emerson Lumber Company mill gave residents access to telephone use, fire hydrants, and electricity.

By the 1940s, the population of Island Falls began to steadily decline and the town experienced an industry shift from forestry to agriculture. Potato processing emerged as the new industry when Maine Potato Processing Company established its roots in town and local farmers began growing commercial potato crops. At the time of its permanent closure in 2009, National Starch was the major employer in Island Falls and had dominated as the town's major industry for 52 years. Today, there are no big industries in Island Falls and the town's population continues to decrease. Presently, the majority of residents work in Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, Public Administration, and Wholesale Trade.

Today, the local economy is fueled by over sixty businesses that offer a range of goods and services. A golf course, campground and yoga retreat offer residents and visitors recreation opportunities and accommodations. Local farms and a food store provide the community with access to locally-grown produce and food. These businesses provide not only goods and services to residents and visitors, but also employment opportunities.

**2). A list of local and regional economic development plans developed over the past five years, which include the community.**

*Island Falls Economic Development Plan*

In 2020, the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) finalized its Economic Development Plan. The Committee works to promote the economic interests of the town and region.

*Aroostook Washington Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*

In 2018, Northern Maine Development Commission published its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy five-year update (2018-2023).<sup>8</sup> This document represents the collaboration efforts between Aroostook County and Washington County to achieve regional economic development objectives.

*Katahdin Gazetteer: A Roadmap to the Future*

In 2019, Katahdin Collaborative, an organization that serves Maine's Katahdin Region, completed this document that serves as a guide for future of the Katahdin Region. Individuals from Island Falls were major participants in this initiative.

**3). Where does the community's population work and where do employees in your community reside? A description of the major employers in the community and labor market area and their outlook for the future.**

There are over 60 businesses that operate within Island Falls. Of the town's population of residents that are 16 years or older, approximately 44.4% participate in the labor force. The community's population works locally and in surrounding towns, including Sherman, Dyer Brook, Stacyville, Patten, and Houlton. Employees in the community reside locally and in surrounding communities in Aroostook County. Major employers in the community include Jerry's Thriftway, Katahdin Trust Company, K & T Environmental Equipment, Va-Jo-Wa Golf Course, Hunt Law Offices, and Birch Point Lodge Campgrounds.

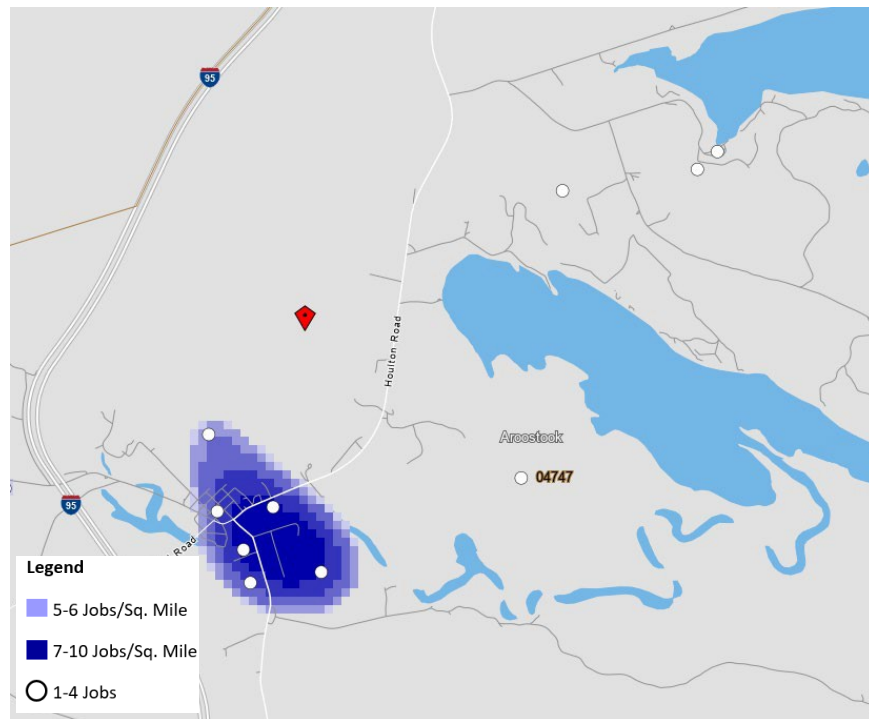
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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nmdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2018-2023-CEDS.pdf> Accessed February 10th, 2021.

**4). A description of any economic development incentive districts, such as tax increment financing districts, in the community.**

Northern Maine Development Commission is the federally designated Economic Development District for Aroostook and Washington Counties. The commission serves as a resource for economic development initiatives. Due to the steadily decreasing population in Aroostook County, the Aroostook County Empowerment Zone (ACEZ) was established in 2002. Pine Tree Development Zone (PTDZ) offers qualifying businesses in Aroostook County the opportunity to greatly reduce state taxes for up to ten years. Through tax credits, the empowerment and development zones benefit businesses and support job retention in the region.

**Island Falls Job Density 2018**



Source: Census On the Map, 2018

The map above displays where jobs are concentrated in Island Falls, by square mile. As of 2018, all jobs were located in the northwestern part of town. Below, is the 2018 labor force overview generated by the Maine Department of Labor. In 2018, of the population that were 16+ years old, approximately 44.4% participated in the labor force. Comparatively, roughly 56% did not participate in the labor force.

## Island Falls Labor Force Overview 2018

	Island Falls	Aroostook County	Maine
<b>Population 16+ years</b>	656	58,042	1,124,997
<b>In Labor Force</b>	291	30,205	692,739
<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>	44.4%	52%	61.5%
<i>Employed</i>	275	28,814	671,759
<i>Unemployed</i>	16	1,391	20,980
<b>Not in Labor Force</b>	365	27,837	308,497

Source: ME Dept. of Labor

### ***Policies***

- 1). To support the type of economic development activity the community desires, reflecting the community's role in the region.
- 2). To make a financial commitment, if necessary, to support desired economic development, including needed public improvements.
- 3). To coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.

### ***Strategies***

- 1). If appropriate, assign responsibility and provide financial support for economic development activities to the proper entity (e.g., a local economic development committee, a local representative to a regional economic development organization, the community's economic development director, a regional economic development initiative, or other)
- 2). Amend local ordinances to reflect the desired scale, design, intensity, and location of future economic development.
- 3). If public investments are foreseen to support economic development, identify the mechanisms to be considered to finance them (local tax dollars, creating a tax increment financing district, a Community Development Block Grant or other grants, bonding, impact fees, etc.)
- 4). Participate in any regional economic development planning efforts.

# **WATER RESOURCES**

## **Goal**

To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State’s water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.

## **Protection & Preservation**

From lakes to rivers, Island Falls is home to a number of waterbodies known for their scenic beauty and the opportunities they present for outdoor recreation. The community takes a proactive approach to protecting and preserving these water resources. At the local level, the Island Falls Lakes Association provides informational and educational resources to emphasize the importance of water health and stewardship. Through partnerships with educational institutions and state entities such as the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, routine water sampling for contaminants demonstrates the community’s commitment to the management and monitoring of their local waterbodies which impacts residents, visitors, and wildlife habitat. The town’s maintained coordination with local communities and state groups to manage these waterbodies will enable residents and visitors the enjoyment of these resources for years to come.

## **Analyses**

### ***1). Are there point sources (direct discharges) of pollution in the community? If so, is the community taking steps to eliminate them?***

The table on the following page displays point source discharges in Island Falls. Currently, these stormwater drains are not monitored for compliance although the Town does watch for impacts to local waterbodies. Thus, there are no licensed point source discharges in Island Falls. The town’s stormwater system is not part of the Clean Water Act Phase II Stormwater program.



<b>Town Stormwater Drains</b>		
<b># of Outfalls</b>	<b>Street</b>	<b>Location</b>
1	10 Burleigh St.	Green Valley/David St.
2	15 Burleigh St.	Kevin LaPlante residence
3	31 Cleaves St.	Playground (LS)
1	Cleaves/Library Sts.	SE corner
1	Cleaves/Library	SW corner
1	Cleaves/Sewall	SW corner
1	49 Fairfield St.	Near old VFW
1	9 Harding St.	By Ashley Skinner
1	15 Harding St.	Arthur Smith drive
1	Katahdin Trust	Library St.
1	30 Library St.	Fire Dept.
1	4 Michaud Rd.	By David (Butch) Emery
2	61 Old Patten/Church	Paul Breton residence
1	55 Sewall St.	Ralph Shaffer residence
1	73 Sewall St.	Corner of Sewall/Church
-	110 Sewall St.	Old Botting lot

Source: Island Falls Town Website

The Town is aware of at least one point source discharge into the Mattawamkeag River. In July of 2020, the Maine Rural Water Association conducted sampling for optical brighteners, surfactants, fluoride, nitrate/nitrite, coliform bacteria and *E. coli* contaminants in four site locations along the Mattawamkeag River. The purpose of the study was to determine the likelihood of failing septic systems in town and to further assess their impacts to water quality. Upon completion of sampling, results indicated that at least one of the six contaminant types were detected at every sample site. The future construction of a public sewer system would mitigate further impacts of these contaminants.

## Water Contaminant Sampling Results in Mattawamkeag River

	Reporting Limit	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4 (upstream baseline)
Optical brightener		94 µg/L	99.8 µg/L	94.7 µg/L	48.0 µg/L
Fluoride	0.20 mg/L	Non-detect	Non-detect	Non-detect	Non-detect
Nitrate/Nitrite	0.10 mg/L	Non-detect	Non-detect	Non-detect	Non-detect
Surfactants	0.050 mg/L	0.080 mg/L	0.060 mg/L	0.090 mg/L	0.050 mg/L
Coliform MPN	1	>2420	>2420	>2420	>2420
<i>E. coli</i> MPN	1	365	276	261	117

Source: Maine Rural Water Association

### **2). Are there non-point sources of pollution? If so, is the community taking steps to eliminate them?**

Yes, non-point source pollution is present in Island Falls, as it is in the vast majority of communities. Non-point source pollution occurs when water from rainfall or snowmelt transports natural and human-made pollutants to waterbodies. Common types of non-point sources include road salt, fertilizers, pesticides, and petroleum products.

Following a water quality test for contaminants in Mattawamkeag River, the Maine Rural Water Association concluded that contaminants including surfactants, optical brighteners and *E. coli* – all of which commonly indicate failing septic systems – were detected. In the baseline upstream sample, contaminant levels were high and remained elevated in the downtown area and downstream from it. Comparatively to other downtown areas, contaminant levels were relatively low in Island Falls’ downtown area although this is likely due to its low density of occupants.

In the summer of 2020, phosphates were discovered in the West Branch Mattawamkeag River. It was then that an outside entity proposed upgrading the River’s classification from Class B to Class A. Class A bodies of water allow impoundments – the accumulation of water created by a dam – and highly restricted discharges while Class B bodies of water have fewer restrictions on activities but still require the maintenance of high water quality criteria.<sup>9</sup> The new classification of West Branch Mattawamkeag River still permits recreational activities such as swimming and boating.

The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance promotes protection against storm water runoff in its statement that “all new construction and development shall be designed to minimize storm water runoff from the site in excess of the natural predevelopment conditions.” In addition, the Ordinance emphasizes the importance of the retention of berms, swales, terraces and wooded areas and the role they play in reducing runoff.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/monitoring/classification/> Accessed March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**3). How are groundwater and surface water supplies and their recharge areas protected?**

The groundwater and surface water supplies and recharge areas are protected in the town's Land Use Ordinance and Well Head Protection Zone. The Code Enforcement Officer also works to ensure that groundwater and surface water supplies and recharge areas are protected by performing onsite inspections as needed.

**4). Do public works crews and contractors use best management practices to protect water resources in their daily operations?**

Yes, public works crews and contractors assist in the protection of local water resources by taking care to monitor the impacts of their practices. The Town of Island Falls shares Maine DEP's commitment to protecting the quality of its waterbodies.

**5). Are there opportunities to partner with local or regional advocacy groups that promote water resource protection?**

Yes, the Island Falls Lakes Association (IFLA) is a local non-profit organization that promotes water resource protection as well as an appreciation for natural resources and responsible preservation, conservation, stewardship, development, and public policy.<sup>10</sup> The Island Falls Lakes Association partners with the Maine Lakes Society, Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program, Lake Smart Property Award, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Audubon Society, and the Town of Dyer Brook.

Strong consideration must be given to climate change and potential impacts including flooding, changes in precipitation, and long-term impacts on water quality in local lakes, ponds, and the West Branch Mattawamkeag River. There are several climate resilience resources available to the town through the [Maine Climate Change Adaptation Toolkit](#), an interagency initiative led by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. The community should refer to these resources when considering preventative measures against climate change impacts.

## **Conditions and Trends**

**1). A description of each great pond, river, surface drinking water supply, and other water bodies of local interest including ecological value, threats to water quality or quantity, and documented water quality and/or invasive species problems.**

Within its boundaries, the Town of Island Falls has Pleasant Lake, Mattawamkeag Lake, Mud (Lost) Pond, Lost Pond, Morgridge Pond, Rock Crusher Pond, Pea Cove, and a portion of Caribou Lake.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.islandfallslakesassociation.com/> Accessed February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

These waterbodies are located in the Upper West Branch Mattawamkeag River watershed. Mattawamkeag Lake and Pleasant Lake are the largest waterbodies in Island Falls at 3,323 acres and 1,817 acres respectively. Caribou Lake is 236 acres and has a perimeter of approximately 3.8 miles. Smaller waterbodies within the town's boundaries include the 13-acre Mud (Lost) Pond, 12-acre Rock Crusher Pond, 3-acre Lost Pond, and the 5-acre Morgridge Pond. According to the most recent Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report generated by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), there are no waterbodies in Island Falls that are impaired. Waterbodies such as these provide flood protection and important habitat and food resources to animal species in the region. According to the Maine DEP, there are no invasive species problems. There are currently projects underway to combat low water levels in Mattawamkeag Lake, particularly near the boat landing. Pleasant Lake is in close proximity to Route 2 and Interstate 95, which makes the water body very susceptible to water quality degradation and soil erosion. Development near water resources also threatens water quality.

***2). A summary of past and present activities to monitor, assess, and/or improve water quality, mitigate sources of pollution, and control or prevent the spread of invasive species.***

The Island Falls Lake Association (IFLA) prioritizes water quality protection and the preservation of local waterbodies. Through the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program developed by the Lake Stewards of Maine, individuals can become trained water monitors and identify sources of phosphorus and invasive plants on boats and boat propellers. On their website, the Association provides educational information on how to ensure the preservation of local lakes and the importance of boat inspections to prevent the spread of invasive aquatic species such as milfoils, hydrilla, water chestnut, spiny water flea, Asian clam, or zebra mussels.

The Town of Island Falls collaborates with the Island Falls Lakes Association to create awareness of the vast tributary system flowing into Mattawamkeag Lake. Water quality in lakes is affected by what flows into them and Mattawamkeag Lake has 286 miles of rivers and streams that drain forestland, agricultural land and roadways into the lake. That is a distance equal to traveling from Island Falls to Seabrook, NH! Erosion along these tributaries can carry non-point source pollutants that can cause unintended consequences, like algae blooms, in the recipient lake. The watershed signs let people know that even small brooks and streams can have an impact on water quality of a lake located many miles away and the Town is proud to take part in creating this public awareness.

The Association also provides funding to help properties obtain the LakeSmart designation, a voluntary program overseen by Maine Lakes that supports projects that minimize stormwater runoff and prioritize water quality preservation. When a property is being evaluated to determine whether it qualifies for a LakeSmart designation, five property

attributes are assessed, some of which include lawns, shoreline areas, and roads. For properties that qualify for LakeSmart designation, owners receive signs to post on their shoreline property. If a property does not qualify for an award, the LakeSmart evaluation team will make recommendations to improve the assessed areas. Since joining the LakeSmart program in 2014, LakeSmart awards have been given to seven properties on Pleasant Lake and three properties on Mattawamkeag Lake. The Association's goal is to become a "Gold Award" association and to have 15% of properties participating in the LakeSmart Program, which equates to 38 properties. The IFLA is seeking volunteers willing to have their property evaluated as well as volunteer evaluators.

In addition to the town's partnership with Unity College to conduct a thorough water quality study of Mattawamkeag Lake, there are currently two water quality projects proposed for the lake. To better control the lake's water level, the first project would involve tasking local contractors and volunteers with constructing a new roll dam structure at the outlet of the lake. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has already given the town verbal support of the project. Next, to improve the boat landing area, a project would involve dredging the area around the end of the upper lakes where the docks are located. These projects would address concerns raised by the Island Falls Fish & Game Club in 2018.

***3). A description of the location and nature of significant threats to aquifer drinking water supplies.***

There are currently no immediate threats to aquifer drinking water supplies that have been identified in Island Falls' aquifer drinking water supplies. Island Falls' Land Use Ordinance, Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, and Wellhead Protection Zone support the protection and preservation of the town's lakes, ponds, and rivers. The Code Enforcement Officer performs onsite inspections as needed to ensure compliance and that the protection and preservation of local waterbodies is prioritized.

***4). A summary of existing lake, pond, river, stream, and drinking water protection and preservation measures, including local ordinances.***

Island Falls' Land Use Ordinance and Shoreland Zoning Ordinance support the protection and preservation of the town's lakes, ponds, and rivers. The Code Enforcement Officer performs onsite inspections as needed to ensure compliance and that the protection and preservation of local waterbodies is prioritized. The IFLA also posts information at the Pleasant Lake boat launch to educate boaters about the importance of water quality protection.

In addition to hosting an annual meeting, the IFLA distributes a newsletter on a biannual basis. In the most recent newsletter distributed in winter 2021, a water quality report that described the effects of phosphorus and dissolved oxygen and water temperature data were highlights.<sup>11</sup> Other newsletter contents included information about the LakeSmart Program, the importance of boat inspections, links to online resources to further educate readers about lake protection and stewardship, and two water quality projects for

Mattawamkeag Lake. Within the water quality report in the newsletter, there were four recommendations from IFLA’s water quality team which, in summary, were to check the ingredients on all products used in the residence and avoid those that contain phosphates, to discontinue the use of fertilizers on lawns and gardens, to monitor the travel of phosphate-containing dirt into local waterbodies during rainstorms, and to plant a riparian buffer to soak up runoff and prevent pollutants from entering local waterbodies.

In the effort to ensure the protection and preservation of water quality in Island Falls, the IFLA monitors dissolved oxygen and water temperature as well as the phosphorus levels in local waterbodies. To monitor dissolved oxygen levels, a probe is lowered into the water column until it reaches the lake bottom. Water temperature impacts dissolved oxygen levels as warm water is less dense and remains at the surface while cold water has a higher density, so water temperature decreases with increasing depth. As seasons change, varying levels of dissolved oxygen contribute to fish stress. For instance, as summer turns to fall, surface waters cool and become denser than water at further depths which leads to a “turn over” where oxygenated surface water mixes with the depleted bottom waters. This signifies that oxygen has been restored to the lake bottom, alleviating the stress on cold-water fish.

### Phosphorus Levels in Island Falls Water Bodies

Location	Water shed Size (sq. mi.)	Annual Flush Rate (flushes per yr)	Avg. Phosphorus Level (ppm)	2021 Phosphorus Level (ppm)	Avg. Water Clarity (m)	2021 Water Clarity (m)	2021 Number of Tests
Pleasant Lake	4.5	0.14	4	4	10	10.4	8
Upper Mattawamkeag Lake	234	42.3	12	11	3.3	4.3	2
Lower Mattawamkeag Lake	8.2	9.8	11	8	3.5	4.9	---

Source: 2021 Island Falls Lakes Association.

The table above displays phosphorus level data for Pleasant Lake, Upper Mattawamkeag Lake, and Lower Mattawamkeag Lake. Of the water bodies, Pleasant Lake contains the least amount of phosphorus at 4 parts per million (ppm) in 2021. In comparison, the upper portion of Mattawamkeag Lake contains the most phosphorus at 11 ppm in 2021. Flush rate measures how often the total volume of water in the lake is replaced. Due to the upper

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.dropbox.com/s/wwob4dkp7tg7efj/2021%20Lake%20Association%20Newsletter.pdf?dl=0> Accessed October 12th, 2021.

portion of Mattawamkeag Lake's connection to the Mattawamkeag River, it has a high flush rate of 42.3 flushes per year. Pleasant Lake's low flush rate coupled with the golf course located on the lake presents a potential threat to water quality. The use of lawn chemicals such as fertilizers that contain phosphorus have the potential to runoff into the lake. Water clarity (Secchi Disc Transparency, SDT) is measured by depth in meters based on the visibility of a circular disk when it is submerged underwater.

### Island Falls Lake Water Quality Indicators

Lake	Water Clarity (m)	Chlorophyll (ppb)	Phosphorus (ppb)	Color (spu)	Alkalinity (mg/l)	pH	Conductivity (uS/cm)
Mattawamkeag Lake	3.5	2.0	14	66	18.2	6.8	55
Pleasant Lake	9.3	1.2	4	6	8.4	6.96	31

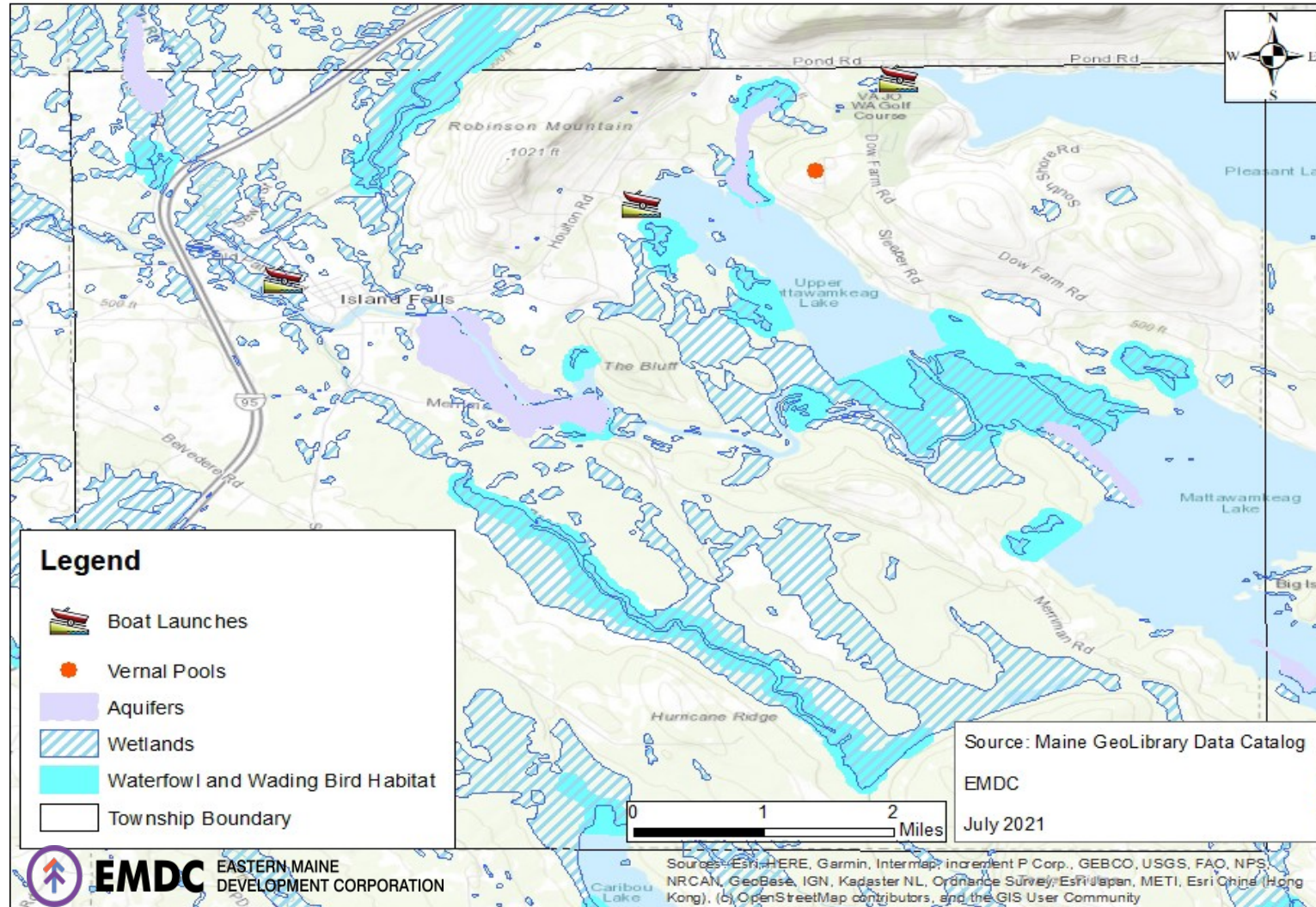
Source: Lake Stewards of Maine.

To analyze how local water quality has changed over time, the above table depicts 2018 data collected and reported by the Lake Stewards of Maine and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. There are several mechanisms that measure water quality including transparency, chlorophyll, phosphorus, color, alkalinity, pH, and conductivity. Using Lake Water Quality Monitoring Reports produced by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection in partnership with the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program, these measures, last documented in 2018, were analyzed. Available data is sourced from sampling stations in Mattawamkeag Lake and Pleasant Lake. Water quality data was not available for other significant water bodies in town - Caribou Lake, Lost Pond, Mud (Lost) Pond, Morgridge Pond, Rock Crusher Pond, and Pea Cove.

Compared to state averages, Mattawamkeag Lake and Pleasant Lake varied on several different levels. Low water clarity, high phosphorus content, high color, high alkalinity, fair acidity, and high conductivity were all descriptors of Mattawamkeag Lake. With low water clarity comes higher algal productivity and phosphorus levels. In contrast, Pleasant Lake had high water clarity, low algae productivity, low phosphorus levels, low color, lower than average alkalinity, slight acidity, and low conductivity. The stark differences between these water types require a variety of management and monitoring techniques to ensure healthy water quality.

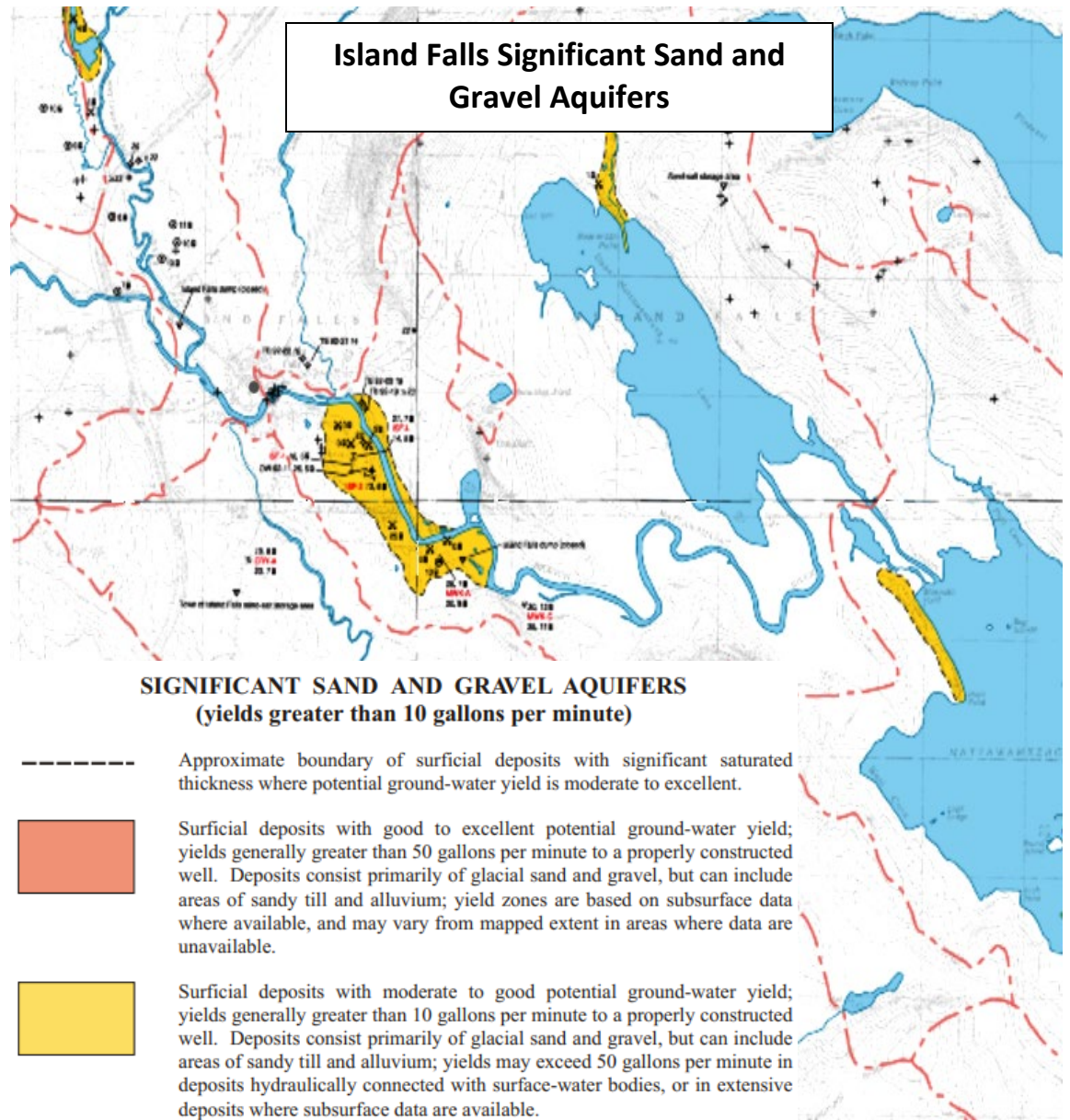


# Island Falls Water Resources



The map above depicts important water resource areas associated with wetlands, habitat, aquifers, vernal pools, and boat launches.

Island Falls is home to four significant sand and gravel aquifers, which, defined by the Maine State Legislature, are porous formations of ice-contact and glacial out-wash sand and gravel or fractured bedrock that contains significant recoverable quantities of water which is likely to provide drinking water supplies. All of Island Falls' sand and gravel aquifers have moderate to good potential ground-water yield at greater than 10 gallons per minute to properly constructed wells. Of the four aquifers in town, the largest is located along the Mattawamkeag River, southeast of the downtown area. The other three smaller aquifers are located in a tributary north of Upper Mattawamkeag Lake, just west of Mosquito Point and Hook Point near Mattawamkeag Lake, and in a section along the West Branch Mattawamkeag River in the upper northwest portion of town. Although there are no prominent threats to Island Falls' aquifers at present, the town should consult with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to monitor local aquifers and identify potential threats such as changes in precipitation, snowmelt patterns, and groundwater contaminants.



Source: Maine Geological Survey.

## ***Policies***

- 1). To protect current and potential drinking water sources.
- 2). To protect significant surface water resources from pollution and improve water quality where needed.
- 3). To protect water resources in growth areas while promoting more intensive development in those areas.
- 4). To minimize pollution discharges through the creation of a public sewer system and upgrade of wastewater treatment facilities.
- 5). To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.

## ***Strategies***

- 1). Amend the land use ordinance as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with:
  - a. Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502).
  - b. Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorous in lake/pond watersheds.
  - c. Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program
- 2). Consider amending the land use ordinance, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development standards.
- 3). Enact public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms, as necessary.
- 4). Encourage landowners to protect water quality. Provide local contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine.
- 5). Adopt water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public and private roads and public properties and require their implementation by contractors, owners, and community officials and employees.
- 6). Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.

- 7). Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species.
- 8). Develop a public sewer system to connect residents with cesspools and failing septic systems to further reduce point source contamination.
- 9). Work with the golf course to become Audubon Certified.
- 10). Encourage town contractors to attend Maine Local Roads workshops.
11. Collaborate with the Island Falls Lakes Association as a municipality to promote lake friendly land use activities.
12. Work to allow fish passage at stream crossings identified in Stream Habitat Viewer (a Maine DEP resource).

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### **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.

### **Natural Community & Wildlife Protection**

Scenic beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, and tourist attraction are just some of the many benefits provided by the natural resources in Island Falls. From open wetlands, ponds, rivers, hills, and low peaks, the community's natural geography supports a variety of wildlife habitats such as deer, bald eagles, mussels, salmon, brook trout, and small-mouth bass. Local ordinances for land use and shoreland zoning provide regulatory protection for areas rich in natural communities and wildlife habitats. The Greater Mattawamkeag Lake Focus Area, designated by the Maine Natural Areas Program and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife provides non-regulatory protection for a specified territory in which important natural communities and State Listed Habitats for significant at-risk wildlife species are located. Building local and regional awareness of these areas is essential for the ongoing conservation, management, and protection of natural resources.

### **Analyses**

#### **1). Are any of the community's critical natural resources threatened by development, overuse, or other activities?**

As defined in the State's Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule<sup>12</sup>, "critical natural resources" are natural resources which under federal and/or state law warrant protection from the negative impacts of development. The majority of the Greater Mattawamkeag Lake Focus Area is located in Island Falls, most of which is situated in the Eastern part of the town.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> [https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/docs/ch208\\_annotated\\_2014.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/docs/ch208_annotated_2014.pdf) Accessed February 10th, 2021.

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/focusarea/greater\\_mattawamkeag.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/focusarea/greater_mattawamkeag.pdf) Accessed March 20th, 2021.'

This Focus Area is defined by open wetlands, small ponds, rivers, and undeveloped shorelines with hills and low peaks.

In addition to Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat located in a variety of water bodies including Caribou Lake, Sly Brook, Mattawamkeag Lake, Upper Mattawamkeag Lake, Pea Cove, Alder Brook, Dyer Brook, and Beaver Dam Point, there are also State Listed Habitats for Brook Floater and Yellow Lampmussel.

Two mussel species, Brook Floaters (*Alasmidonta varicosa*) and Yellow Lampmussels (*Lampsilis cariosa*) are designated as “Threatened Species” by the State of Maine. Brook Floaters can be found in the West Branch and East Branch Mattawamkeag River as well as in Fish Stream and on the east side of Pleasant Lake, while Yellow Lampmussels can be found along the West Branch of the Mattawamkeag River and in Mattawamkeag Lake – including Upper Mattawamkeag Lake. The habitats provided to these threatened freshwater mussel species that rely on rivers, streams, and ponds must be sustained in order to continue supporting their populations.

There are several rare and exemplary natural community types in Island Falls including Hemlock Forest, Dwarf Shrub Bog, and Silver Maple Floodplain Forest, Rivershore Outcrop, Alder Floodplain, and Upper Floodplain Hardwood Forest. The rare natural community types (Upper Floodplain Hardwood Forest, Rivershore Outcrop, and Silver Maple Floodplain Forest) and more common types (Hemlock Forest, Alder Floodplain, and Dwarf Shrub Bog) provide important habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals. One rare plant (Hysop-leaved Fleabane) has been found at the Rivershore Outcrop along the West Branch Mattawamkeag River.

Landlocked salmon, seasonal brook trout, rainbow smelt, and small-mouth bass populate several high-quality fisheries in Pleasant Lake, East Branch Mattawamkeag River, and West Branch Mattawamkeag River. Brook trout habitat is prevalent in Mattawamkeag Lake and Upper Mattawamkeag Lake as well as in surrounding tributary streams.

At present, there are no identified threats to critical natural resources in Island Falls, however to continue this trend, the protection and preservation of these species must continue to be prioritized.

**2). Are local shoreland zone standards consistent with state guidelines and with the standards placed on adjacent shorelands in neighboring communities?**

Yes, there is a current local Shoreland Zoning Ordinance that is consistent with state guidelines as well as with the standards placed on adjacent shorelines in

local communities. Sections within the ordinance, such as the “Resource Protection District”, “Water Quality”, and “Storm Water Runoff” emphasize Island Falls’ commitment to protecting its waterbodies as well as significant wildlife habitats and the species that reside within them.

**3). *What regulatory and non-regulatory measures has the community taken or can the community take to protect critical natural resources and important natural resources?***

The southeast portion of the land surrounding Mattawamkeag Lake is listed as a conservation easement, although the easement boundary does not extend into town boundaries.<sup>14</sup>

This designation provides permanent protection for land use, vital wildlife habitat, water quality, and outdoor recreation. The Mattawamkeag Lake Focus Area is a non-regulatory area that contains at-risk species, as well as significant natural communities and wildlife habitats, and their intersection with large blocks of undeveloped habitat. Focus areas are designated by the Maine Natural Areas Program and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to develop regional awareness of the important natural resources and species that are present within them, and act as a planning tool for landowners, conservation entities, and towns. Multiple stakeholders including both of these state entities assist in the designation of Focus Areas. The Island Falls Lakes Association (IFLA) not only focuses on water resource protection, but also educating the local community on ways to become better stewards of Pleasant and Mattawamkeag Lakes.

The Town has an extensive forest management plan that follows all State guidelines. The Comprehensive Plan is particularly sensitive to the protection of riparian habitats and the Town’s policy is to always follow best management practices for timber harvesting. The Town is also very much aware of its critical role in protecting endangered species such as the Brook Floater and Yellow Lampmussel.

**4). *Is there current regional cooperation or planning underway to protect shared critical natural resources? Are there opportunities to partner with local or regional groups?***

The Aroostook County Conservation Association has been working on conservation initiatives in the region for 13 years.

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<sup>14</sup> [https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/publications\\_maps/conservation\\_lands\\_maine.html](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/publications_maps/conservation_lands_maine.html) Accessed March 20th, 2021.

The group's primary mission is the preservation of the county's whitetail deer population. The Town has partnered with Huber Resources to manage its 9,000+ acres of forest land. Huber Resources takes particular care to ensure a sustainable forest for future generations and provide buffer strips during harvesting to protect water quality and deer wintering areas, as well as significant and essential wildlife habitat.

## ***Conditions and Trends***

### ***1). A description of scenic areas and scenic views of local importance, and regional or statewide importance.***

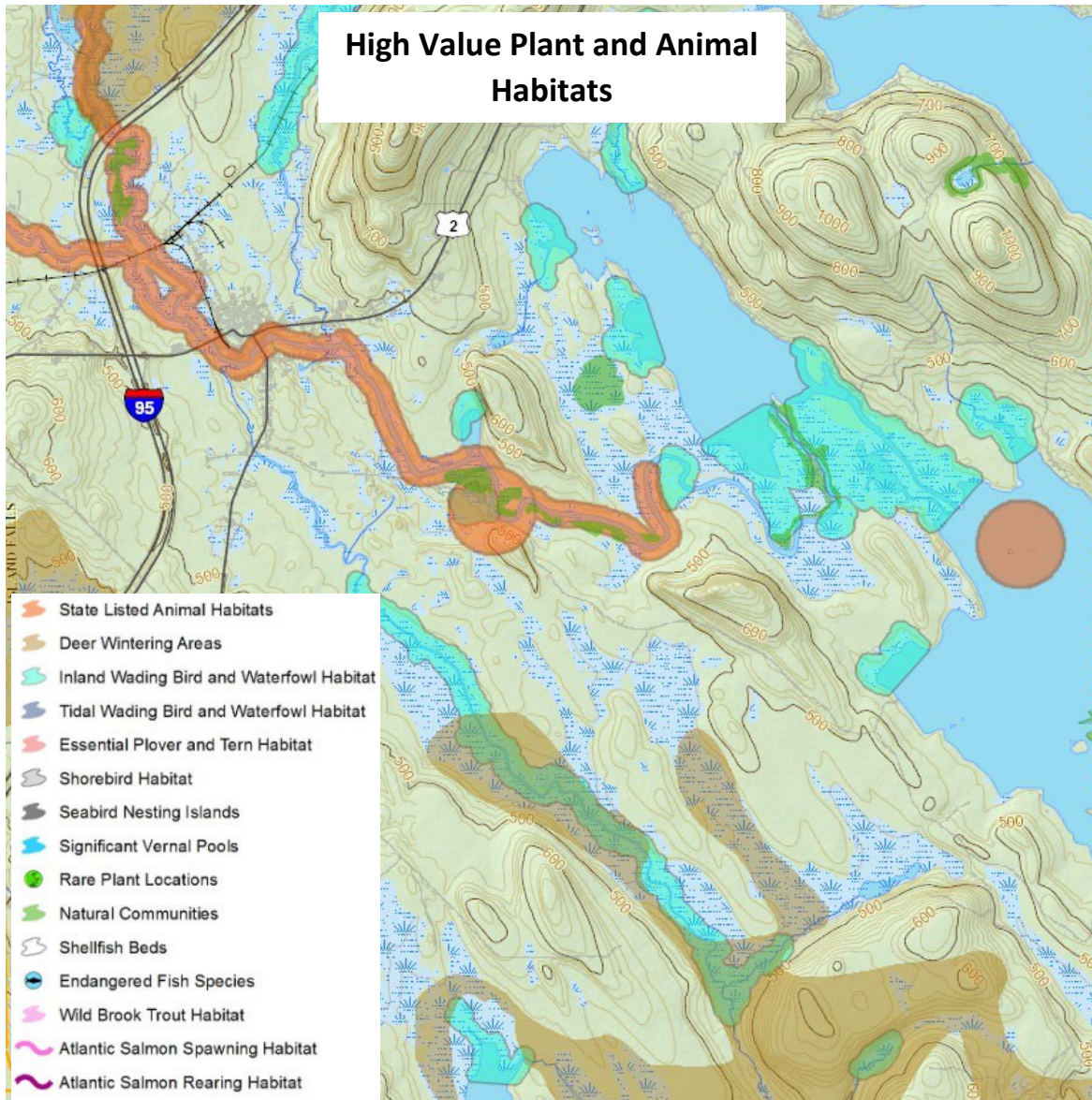
- Bible Point Historic Site – Bible Point State Historic Site is an area of historical significance and natural beauty. It is a spot where Theodore Roosevelt visited often with his friend – a local guide, named William Sewall.
- Island Falls' water bodies – Mattawamkeag Lake, Upper Mattawamkeag Lake, Pleasant Lake, Caribou Lake, West Branch Mattawamkeag River, Lost Pond, Mud (Lost) Pond, Morgridge Pond, Rock Crusher Pond, and Pea Cove all provide scenic views and some provide recreational opportunities such as fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and boating.



### Threat Level of Natural Communities, Animal & Plant Species in Island Falls

Common Name	Latin Name	Threat Level	Type	Location
Brook Floater	<i>Alasmidonta varicosa</i>	Threatened	Mollusk	Mattawamkeag River, Pleasant Lake and Fish Stream
Yellow Lampmussel	<i>Lampsilis cariosa</i>	Threatened	Mollusk	Mattawamkeag River, Mattawamkeag Lake and Upper Mattawamkeag Lake
Upper Floodplain Hardwood Forest	Hardwood river terrace forest	Rare	Natural Community	West Branch Mattawamkeag River
Rivershore Outcrop	Bluebell – balsam ragwort shoreline outcrop	Rare	Natural Community	West Branch Mattawamkeag River
Hemlock Forest	Hemlock forest	Exemplary	Natural Community	Pleasant Lake Shoreline and Big Island
Dwarf Shrub Bog	Sheep laurel dwarf shrub bog	Exemplary	Natural Community	West of Upper Mattawamkeag Lake
Silver Maple Floodplain Forest	Silver maple floodplain forest	Rare	Natural Community	West Branch Mattawamkeag River
Alder Floodplain	Alder floodplain	Exemplary	Natural Community	West Branch Mattawamkeag River
Hyssop-leaved Fleabane	<i>Erigeron hyssopifolius</i>	Special Concern	Rare plant	West Branch Mattawamkeag River

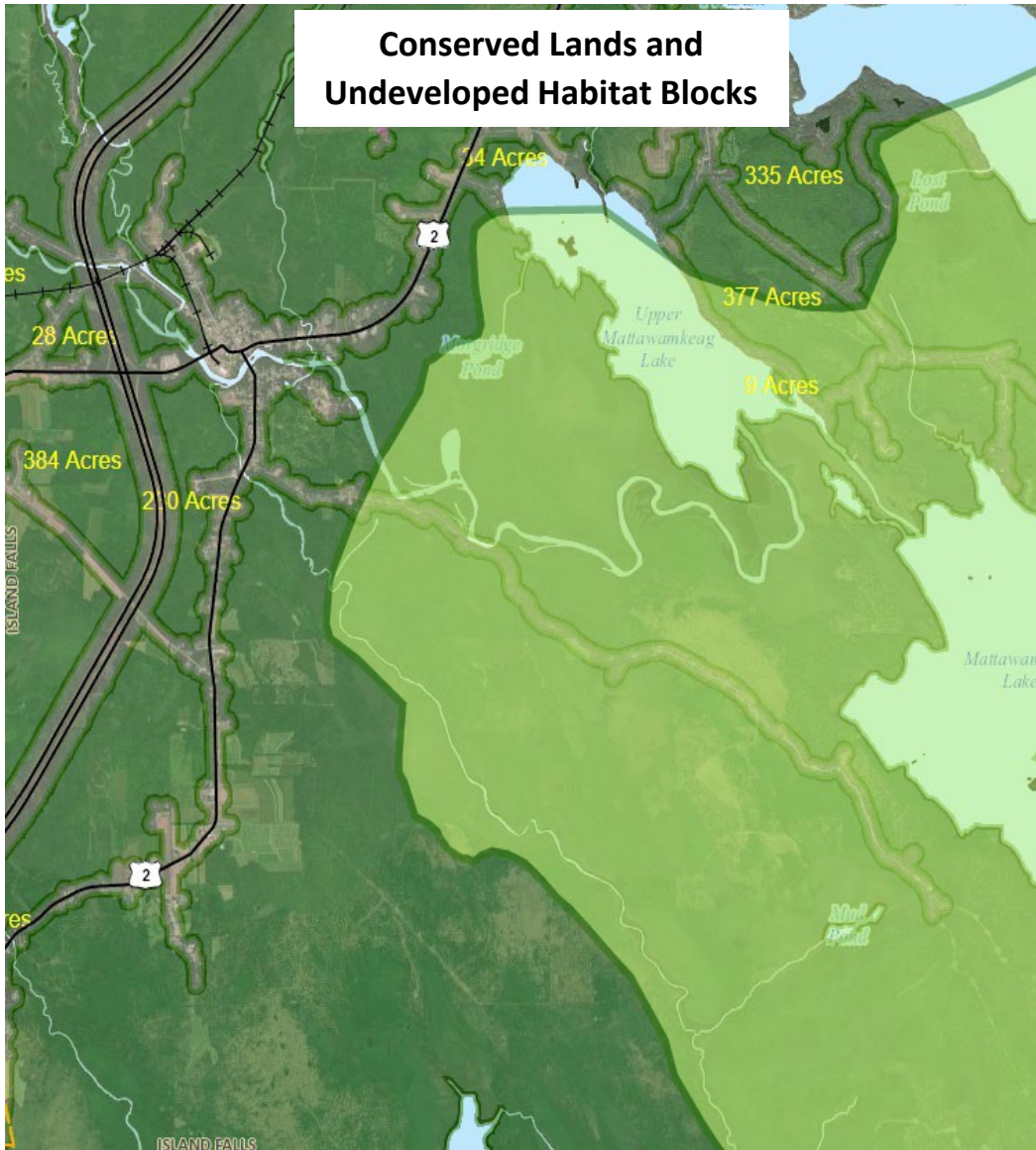
Source: Maine Natural Areas Program. Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.



Source: Beginning with Habitat Program. Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

The map above depicts known rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal occurrences, as well as “Significant Wildlife Habitat” and “Essential Wildlife Habitat” in Island Falls.

## Conserved Lands and Undeveloped Habitat Blocks



Source: Beginning with Habitat, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

The map above depicts the State of Maine’s conserved lands database, which includes lands in federal, state, and nonprofit ownership.

### Ownership Types (transparent layers)

**Federal:** National parks, forests, and wildlife refuges.

**State:** Wildlife Management Areas and other properties managed by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, state parks, and parcels managed by the Bureau of Parks & Lands.

**Municipal:** Town parks, water district properties, community forests, etc.

**Private Conservation:** Properties owned and managed by private (usually nonprofit) organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, Maine Coast Heritage Trust; Trust for Public Land, and local land trusts.

**Easement:** Voluntary legal agreements that allow landowners to realize economic benefit by permanently restricting the amount and type of future development and other uses on all or part of their property as they continue to own and use it.

### Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance

**Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance** have been designated based on an unusually rich convergence of rare plant and animal occurrences, high value habitat, and relatively intact natural landscapes (the combined elements of Beginning with Habitat Maps 1-3). Focus area boundaries were drawn by MNAP and MDIFW biologists, generally following drainage divides and/or major fragmenting features such as roads. Focus Areas are intended to draw attention to these truly special places in hopes of building awareness and garnering support for land conservation by landowners, municipalities, and local land trusts. For descriptions of specific Focus Areas, consult the Beginning with Habitat notebook or the following website:

<http://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/focusarea/index>

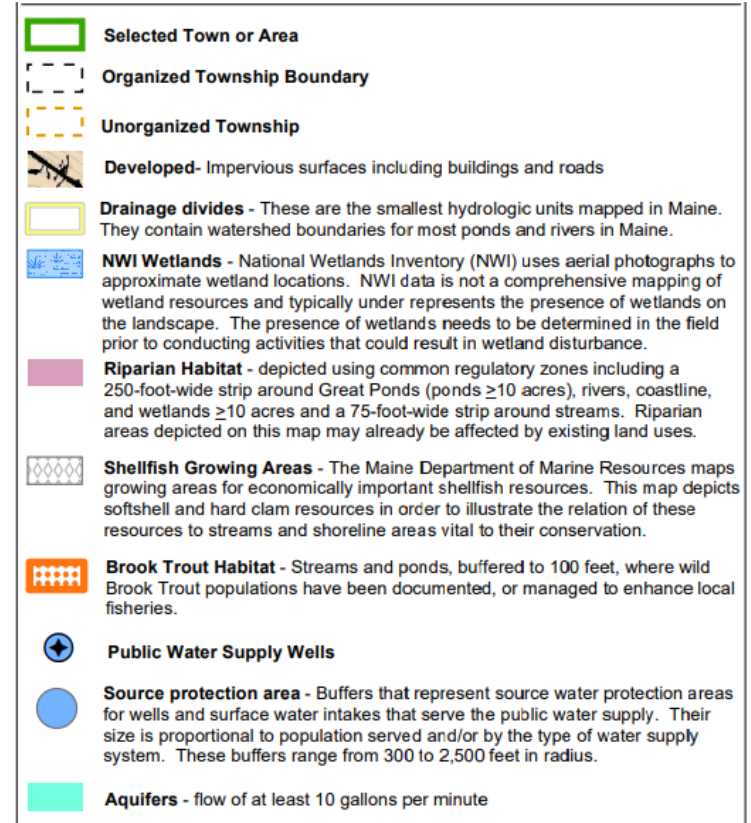
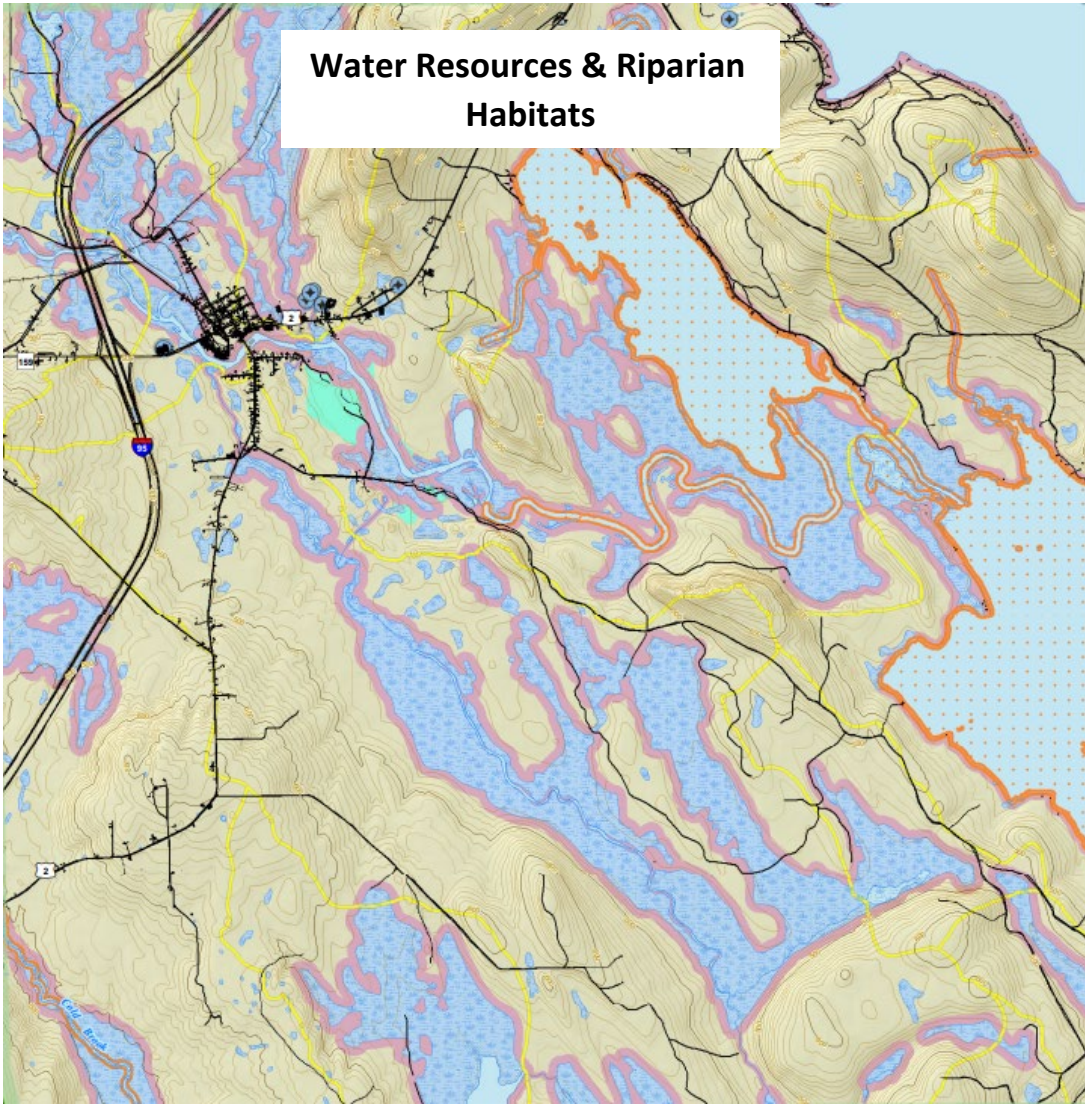


### Habitat Blocks

**Development Buffer** (pale transparency): 250-500 foot buffer around improved roads and developed areas based on development intensity.

**Undeveloped Habitat Block:** Remaining land outside of Development Buffers. Blocks greater than 100 acres are labeled with their estimated acreage.

## Water Resources & Riparian Habitats



Source: Beginning with Habitat, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

The map above depicts wetlands, aquifers, riparian habitat, brook trout habitat, and public water supply wells. Brook trout populations are prevalent in Upper and Lower Mattawamkeag Lake, and in surrounding tributary streams.

## ***Policies***

- 1). To conserve critical natural resources in the community.
- 2). To coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.

## ***Strategies***

- 1). Ensure that the land use ordinance is consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources.
- 2). Designate critical natural resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan.
- 3). Through the land use ordinance, require subdivision or non-residential property developers to look for and identify critical natural resources that may be on site and to appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent or extraction.
- 4). Through the land use ordinance, require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to include as part of the review process, consideration of pertinent BwH maps and information regarding critical natural resources. The BwH maps are to be used for planning purposes only. For permitting and specific development review purposes, the project applicant and/or town staff should contact MDIFW and MNAP.
- 5). Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.
- 6). Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.
- 7). Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations.

# **AGRICULTURAL & FOREST RESOURCES**

## **Goal**

To safeguard the State’s agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.

## **Agricultural & Forest Resource Protection**

Since the 1900s, agriculture and the protection of forest resources have played a significant role in the community. Historically, Island Falls was built upon farming and agriculture, in which logging and family farming were prevalent. Today, their prevalence remains as small farms sell their produce at farm stands and 9,000+ acres of town-owned forestland are locally managed. In specified areas, the state manages timber harvesting activities to foster forest regeneration, enhance wildlife habitat, and provide protection against forest fires. Island Falls works collaboratively with local communities, educational institutions, and state entities to maintain the proper protection of and support for these resources.

## **Analyses**

### **1). How important is agriculture and/or forestry and are these activities growing, stable, or declining?**

Agriculture and forestry are very important to the Island Falls community. A significant amount of land is actively managed. Not only is forestry an important employer in town, it also plays a vital role in Aroostook County, as Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting ranks as number seven on the list of industries that employ the most individuals. Of the top industries in Aroostook County, Forestry employs close to 2,000 people.<sup>15</sup> Although Agriculture is not as important of an industry as it was in the 1960s and 1970s, it has improved to a degree in the short term. Farmers like Daniel Corey of Seed Pro Inc. located in Island Falls and Crystal play a significant role in local agriculture.

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<sup>15</sup> [file:///C:/Users/AStockman/Dropbox/My%20PC%20\(EMDCGIS-PC\)/Downloads/Industry%20Snapshot.pdf](file:///C:/Users/AStockman/Dropbox/My%20PC%20(EMDCGIS-PC)/Downloads/Industry%20Snapshot.pdf)  
Accessed March 21, 2021.

**2). Is the community currently taking regulatory and/or non-regulatory steps to protect productive farming and forestry lands? Are there local or regional land trusts actively working to protect farms or forest lands in the community?**

Within the last five years, the Town of Island Falls adopted statewide standards for timber harvesting in its Shoreland Zone. Forestry professionals employed by the State enforce timber harvesting and forestry administration which, among other benefits, ensures shoreline integrity and protects against the exposure of mineral soil that could erode and infiltrate water bodies.

**3). Are farm and forest landowners taking advantage of the state's current use tax laws?**

Yes, forest landowners do take advantage of the Tree Growth Tax Law – a law enacted in 1972. This law requires State landowners to develop a Woodland Management Plan, which involves filling out a worksheet that describes land characteristics such as acreage, waterbodies, wildlife, trail information, and tree species.

**4). Has proximity of new homes or other incompatible uses affected the normal farming and logging operations?**

If any, there are minimal impacts of housing and other land use development on local farming and logging operations.

**5). Are there large tracts of agricultural or industrial forest land that have been or may be sold for development in the foreseeable future? If so, what impact would this have on the community?**

To the knowledge of a local district forester, currently, there are not any large parcels for sale in Island Falls.

**6). Does the community support community forestry or agriculture (i.e. small woodlots, community forests, tree farms, community gardens, farmers' markets, or community-supported agriculture)? If so, how?**

The town has always been a large supporter of forestry and agriculture. In 2019, the town adopted a Food Sovereignty ordinance that allows small farms in the town as well as individuals to sell what they grow, cook and produce on their property. The initiative has led to a couple of local farms selling jams, jellies, and fresh baked bread, and a family selling fresh baked goods on a stand outside of their home. In the past, Island Falls held a weekly farmers' market where local farmers and small businesses could sell their goods. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the frequency of farmers' markets has decreased to once a month.

Several times a year, the town opens the community gym for local vendors to sell food, crafts, and more during events.

**7). Does the community have town or public woodlands under management, or that would benefit from forest management?**

As stated previously, Island Falls owns over 9,000 acres of forestland that is locally managed. In specified areas, the state manages timber harvesting activities to foster forest regeneration, enhance wildlife habitat, and provide protection against forest fires.

## **Conditions and Trends**

**1). A description of the community's farms, farmland, and managed forest lands and a brief description of any that are under threat.**

Island Falls is home to a number of woodlot and acreage owners. Before potato processing gained prominence in the 1940s, agriculture, logging, and family farming formed the base of the economy. Today, farms and farm stands are still present in the community, including among the local Amish community in town.

Most of the threats to forestland in Island Falls are related to invasive forest pests, including beech bark disease, spruce budworm, and emerald ash borer. Beech bark disease, which leads to the degradation of American beech trees, requires active professional management to improve the productivity of the forest.

**2). Information on the number of parcels and acres of farmland, tree growth, and open space enrolled in the state's farm, tree growth, and open space law taxation programs, including changes in enrollment over the past 10 years.**

Municipal valuation data of farmland and tree growth parcels and acreage between 2010 and 2020 is below, in addition to timber harvest information recorded between 1991 and 2018. Over the past decade, Island Falls did not report any parcels or acres of open space enrolled in a state law taxation program.

**3). A description of any community farming and forestry activities (e.g., community garden, farmers' market, or community forest).**

Farming and forestry play significant roles in the community. Small farms grow and sell their produce at farm stands and a farmers' market organized by the



town. Forested land is actively managed by state-employed forestry professionals, particularly in the Shoreland Zone. Many private landowners take advantage of the 1972 Tree Growth Tax Law, which requires the completion of a Woodland Management Plan to identify their land characteristics and support the protection of the waterbodies, wildlife, and tree species that are present.

### Island Falls Land Enrolled in State Farmland and Tree Growth Taxation Programs

Year	Farmland			Tree Growth		
	Parcels	Acres	Total Valuation	Parcels	Acres	Total Valuation
2010	39	689	\$323,785	18	4,308	\$422,555
2011	39	602	\$288,629	19	4,266	\$438,556
2012	39	686	\$322,229	37	5,161	\$617,623
2013	0	0	0	37	5,192	\$636,549
2014	0	0	0	38	5,232	\$694,926
2015	0	0	0	38	5,228	\$702,520
2016	0	0	0	38	5,228	\$818,768
2017	0	0	0	41	6,014	\$991,212
2018	0	0	0	44	6,298	\$1,015,390
2019	0	0	0	45	6,298	\$939,211
2020	0	0	0	46	6,413	\$1,874,875

Source: Maine Revenue Services

## Island Falls Timber Harvest Information 1991-2019

YEAR	Selectio n harvest , acres	Shelterwood harvest, acres	Clearcut harvest, acres	Total Harvest, acres	Change of land use, acres	Number of active Notifications
1991	496	0	25	521	2	8
1992	273	100	25	398	2	6
1993	204	30	0	234	0	5
1994	557	0	0	557	0	8
1995	693	3	0	696	0	9
1996	509	225	20	754	0	8
1997	563	0	0	563	0	6
1998	713	3	95	811	20	11
1999	506	200	0	706	0	19
2000	640	2	0	642	0	19
2001	561	0	0	561	0	15
2002	229	0	0	229	0	21
2003	256	0	0	256	0	15
2004	200	241	0	441	35	14
2005	360	210	0	570	5	15
2006	719	40	0	759	0	13
2007	270	68	0	338	30	14
2008	708	84	0	792	17	17
2009	681	363	0	1044	0	18
2010	268	45	5	318	0	15
2011	224	220	0	444	1	14
2012	157	30	0	187	20	15
2013	440	142	30	612	0	22
2014	198	401	0	599	20	21
2015	725.9	610	0	1335.9	5	22
2016	180	25	0	205	0	16
2017	135	392	41	568	23.6	22
2018	278	163	0	441	1	11
2019	832	11.4	0	843.4	23	19
Total	12575.9	3608.4	241	16425.3	204.6	418
Average	434	124	8	566	7	14

Source: Maine Forest Service

## ***Policies***

- 1). To safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.
- 2). To support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.

## ***Strategies***

- 1). Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869.
- 2). Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations and pertaining to agricultural management practices.
- 3). Amend the land use ordinance to require commercial or subdivision developments in critical rural areas, if applicable, maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.
- 4). Limit non-residential development in critical rural areas to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.
- 5). Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs.
- 6). Permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations.
- 7). Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans.

# ***HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES***

## ***Goal***

To preserve the State’s historic and archaeological resources.

## ***Historic Resource Protection***

The Town of Island Falls takes great pride in the many historic resources that have shaped the character and layout of the community, hence the community’s vision: “An Historic Community with a Distinctive Heritage Growing into Modern Times”. Since the town’s incorporation in 1872, three properties – the Jail House Museum, Island Falls Opera House, and William Sewall House – have gained national recognition on the National Register of Historic Places. To provide specialized protection for these and other historical properties, the Island Falls Historical Society, founded in 1990, owns several buildings of historical significance. At the local regulatory level, the community’s Subdivision Ordinance requires developers to identify whether their projects are located in an area of historical significance and if necessary, to take steps towards ensuring the proper protection of those resources. The town’s commitment to preserving properties of historical importance sheds light on the immense value the community places on these resources.

## ***Analyses***

### ***1). Based on your knowledge of the town’s history would you say that historic patterns of settlement are still evident in the community?***

Old stone walls and cellars indicate the significant role that agriculture and farming played in Island Falls’ past. Today, there are still working farms in the town. Buildings built as early as 1880 are still standing.

### ***2). What protective measures currently exist for historic and archaeological resources and are they effective?***

The Island Falls Historical Society owns several properties in town, including the Tingley House, a turn-of-the-century era home, and the Bev Rand Potato House. The town owns the historic Jail building and is trying to maintain and preserve the historic look. In 2020, the roof was replaced and plans are in place to repair portions of the façade and entryway. The community is currently in the process of protecting the island in town where a mill once was. Local zoning also prioritizes the protection of historic properties.

**3). Do local site plan and/or subdivision regulations require applicants proposing development in areas that may contain historic or archaeological resources to conduct a survey for such resources?**

The Review Criteria of Island Falls' Subdivision Ordinance requires applicants to determine whether a site is of historic or prehistoric importance as designated by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and if so, to identify the appropriate measures they will take for the protection of the historic or prehistoric resources.

**4). Have significant historic resources fallen into disrepair, and are there ways the community can provide incentives to preserve their value as an historic resource?**

Historic properties that had previously been in a state of disrepair are now restored for the most part. For example, the Opera House that had previously been in a state of disrepair is undergoing renovations. Once completed, the building will contain a store, housing units and a theater that may be open to the public in the future.

## **Conditions and Trends**

**1). An outline of the community's history, including a brief description of historic settlement patterns and events contributing to the development and character of the community and its surroundings.**

The Town of Island Falls was incorporated in 1872. Before the construction of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad in the 1890s, Island Falls was a small town of woods workers and family farms. Logging and agriculture played significant roles in the local economy in the late 1800s and throughout the 1900s.

Although the Town experienced a steady population increase between the late 1800s and early 1900s, by the 1940s, the local population began to decline and a new industry emerged – potato processing. Until its closure in 2009, National Starch employed a significant percentage of the local population. Today, the local economy is fueled by over 60 businesses that offer a range of goods and services to the small community.

There are a number of areas of local and historical significance in the Island Falls area. Reminiscent of the days that starch played an important role in the local economy is the Bev Rand Potato House, an old potato house that is now owned by the Island Falls Historical Society. While it is not currently open to the public, the Society envisions the building, which contains old farming equipment and tools, becoming a museum for the public to enjoy. Located in close proximity to

the Bev Rand Potato House is the Tingley House, a turn-of-the-century home built around 1909. What was once a home to the Tingley family who were executives at the local lumber mill is now a building in possession of the Island Falls Historical Society that is prioritizing its restoration to be a future museum.<sup>16</sup>

What was once a home to the Tingley family who were executives at the local lumber mill is now a building in possession of the Island Falls Historical Society that is prioritizing its restoration to be a future museum.<sup>16</sup> Another house of historical significance is the William Sewall House located at 1027 Crystal Road. Built in 1865, the building was home to William Wingate Sewall, a local guide and friend of Theodore Roosevelt, former U.S. President and frequent visitor of Island Falls until 1878. Today, Sewall's descendant, Donna Davidge, is operating a very successful yoga retreat at 1027 Crystal Road, next to the Post Office. Two other buildings of historic significance are the Jail House Museum, which once operated as the town office, the library, a jail with two iron cells in the basement, and the Island Falls Opera House, which once served as a movie theater among other purposes.<sup>17</sup>

Of the buildings and sites described above, three are listed as historic properties on the National Register of Historic Places – the Jail House, Island Falls Opera House, and William Sewall House.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://umaine.edu/undiscoveredmaine/small-business/maine-businesses-and-success-stories/island-falls-historical-society/> Accessed April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

<sup>17</sup> <https://thecounty.me/2019/05/10/news/former-town-office-jail-placed-on-national-register-of-historic-places/> Accessed April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**2). An inventory of the location, condition, and use of any historical or archaeological resource that is of local importance.**

**Locations of Historical Significance & Local Importance**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Use</b>
Bev Rand Potato House	Nina Sawyer Lane	In Need of Renovations	Museum/Educational
William Sewall House	Crystal Road	Good	Seasonal Yoga Retreat Center/Residence
Island Falls Opera House	Burleigh Street	Good	Housing/Community Theater/Store
Jail House	Burleigh Street	Under Renovation	Museum/Educational
Tingley House	Nina Sawyer Lane	Good/95% Restored	Museum/Educational
Bible Point State Historic Site	West Branch Mattawamkeag River and First Brook	Good	Tourism/Educational

**3). A brief description of threats to local historic resources and to those of state and national significance as identified by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.**

Climate change presents a threat to the future of historic properties in Maine. Reductions in air quality and a higher frequency of intense storms and high winds could greatly impact the historic infrastructure. To assist in the protection and preservation of historical resources and plan for the impacts of climate change, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission has created a webpage that consists of toolkits and links to resources from State preservation partners.



Source: National Park Service GIS Data Services Directory, CRGIS.



The map on the previous page depicts locations of properties that are formally listed on the National Register of Historic Places in Island Falls, as identified by the National Park Service and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

*Note: as of January 2020, the National Park Service's National Register spatial dataset is incomplete – the discrepancies are in the process of being addressed.*



Above is a photograph of Emerson House, one of the many historic properties in Island Falls.

## ***Policies***

1). Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.

## ***Strategies***

1). For known historic archaeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, through the land use ordinance require subdivision or non-residential developers to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.

2). Amend the land use ordinance to require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.

3). Work with the local or county historic society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary plan for a comprehensive community survey of the community's historic and archaeological resources.

## **RECREATION**

### **Goal**

To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.

### **Opportunities for Recreation**

Outdoor recreation is a significant asset to Island Falls, and a major driver for the attraction of tourists and home buyers seeking properties in areas rich in recreation opportunities. As a four-season destination, Island Falls offers a variety of outdoor activities including snowmobiling, four wheeling, and skiing in the wintertime and swimming, boating, and fishing in the summer months. Between the local boat launches, nature trails, and numerous acres of forestland, all are accessible for public use. With support from community volunteers and the Big Valley Sno Club, trails for hiking and snow sledding are regularly maintained. In the future, the current trail system will be expanded upon to include additional trails for public enjoyment. As stewards of the land, the community takes great care of the natural resources and waterbodies on which they explore.

### **Analyses**

#### ***1). Will existing recreational facilities and programs in the community and region accommodate projected growth or changes in age groups in your community?***

Although the population of Island Falls is not expected to change drastically within the next 15 years, the Town has experienced a small influx of new residents since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020. Despite the slight growth experienced by the community during this time, the existing local recreational facilities and programs are expected to accommodate projected growth in the municipality.

#### ***2). Is there a need for certain types of services or facilities or to upgrade or enlarge present facilities to either add capacity or make them more usable?***

There are several existing structures, clubhouses, and historical buildings in town, some of which would benefit from upgrades and development. For example, in the Opera House which contains a community theater that is original to the building, there are also housing units. This property has the

potential to add more housing units in the future. Another building, the Grange Hall, currently has a gymnasium inside but has the potential to also serve as a dance studio and martial arts center. Other structures, such as the historic Tingley House, is currently under renovation so that the building can be open to the public and operate as a museum. These examples emphasize the many opportunities for Island Falls to expand its residential offerings and enhance its historical resources.

***3). Are important tracts of open space commonly used for recreation public-owned or otherwise permanently preserved?***

There is no shortage of recreational opportunities in Island Falls. The town's nine thousand acres of forestland are accessible to the public for a variety of activities including hiking, hunting, and ATV use. Some of the many publicly-owned areas utilized for recreation are the ball fields located behind the Town Office, the boat launch at Mattawamkeag River, and Pleasant Pond, where swimming, fishing, and boating are permitted.

***4). Does the community have a mechanism, such as an open space fund or partnership with a land trust, to acquire important open spaces and access sites, either outright or through conservation easements?***

The town is currently in the process of obtaining a formal easement on a plot of land where the future River Walk Trail will be located. The trail will connect to the town island, include an historic river crossing, and follow an old logging road that was once used to transport hemlock bark to the town's former tannery. The acquisition of the property easement will enable the town to create, maintain, and conserve the area for ongoing public recreation.

***5). Does the public have access to each of the community's significant water bodies?***

Yes, there are boat launches accessible to the public at Pleasant Pond and the Fish and Game Club at Mattawamkeag Lake. At Mattawamkeag River, there is hand-carry access for kayaking and canoeing at Green's Landing and in the downtown area.

***6). Are recreational trails in the community adequately maintained? Are there use conflicts on these trails?***

For the most part, local recreational trails are adequately maintained. When logging trails are not in use, they provide a great trail system for residents and visitors. There are no significant use conflicts on trails at present.

**7). *Is traditional access to private lands being restricted?***

Yes, however landowners whose land contains a trail that has historically been accessible to the public are generally supportive of the maintenance and accessibility of these areas. The town is currently in the process of obtaining a legal right of way on the property of the Hathaway and Brooks Equipment Services so a trail can be created in close proximity to Sly Brook for residents and visitors to enjoy.

***Conditions and Trends***

***1). A description of important public and private active recreation programs, land and water recreation areas (including hunting and fishing areas), and facilities in the community and region, including regional recreational opportunities as appropriate, and identification of unmet needs.***

There are various opportunities for recreation in Island Falls, all of which are supported by the local Recreation Department led by Ruth Frazier. In town, a mixed martial arts instructor utilizes a town facility to provide classes to the community. Various clubs including the Island Falls Fish and Game Club, Big Valley Sno Club, and the Island Falls Free Wheelers ATV Club utilize town buildings for their meetings. Birch Point Campground and Vacationland Estates offer various recreational activities such as camping, lodging, paddle boating, kayaking and swimming.

Bible Point Historic Site is an area of historical significance, as it was a location frequented by Theodore Roosevelt and his friend and guide William Sewall, a local guide. Located just outside of Island Falls at the confluence of the West Branch Mattawamkeag River and First Brook, the spot is best accessed by ATV.

The community has a future project on the horizon to create a park on the island located in the middle of town. The park would contain benches and a boardwalk around the perimeter. The project would primarily be funded by grant money.

Ample hunting and fishing opportunities are available on the 9,000+ acres of town-owned forested lands. Individuals can fish on the town's three lakes, two rivers, and several small ponds and streams.

There are several opportunities for recreation in the region. Within Aroostook County, there are various mountains for hiking, including Quaggy Joe Mountain in Aroostook State Park, Haystack Mountain in Castle Hill, and Deboullie Mountain in Allagash. Hunting for black bear, white-tailed deer, and

moose is also available throughout the region. Popular scenic byways include the Million Dollar View Scenic Byway, the Grindstone Scenic Byway, Fish River Scenic Byway or St. John Valley Cultural Byway.<sup>18</sup>

**2). An inventory of any fresh or salt water bodies in the community determined locally to have inadequate public access.**

Although all water bodies offer adequate access to the public, an area of improvement is wayfinding signage. To spread more awareness of local trails and water bodies that the area has to offer, signage near the exit ramps of Interstate 95 should be improved.

**3). A description of local and regional trail systems, trail management organizations, and conservation organizations that provide trails for all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiling, skiing, mountain biking, or hiking.**

Local

- A notable local trail is the Historic Robinson Mountain Hiking Trail which also happens to be a former ski area. Recently, local volunteers and the Free Wheelers ATV Club installed signage, widened and cleared the trail, which is 4.5 miles long. At the end of the trail, there is a picnic area and views of Upper Mattawamkeag and Pleasant Lakes. The trail is named after Major George Robinson, a former resident in Island Falls in the 1800s. Robinson was a member of the 8<sup>th</sup> Maine Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. In 1865, Robinson notably stopped a co-conspirator of John Wilkes Booth from assassinating Secretary of State William Steward in 1865.<sup>19</sup>
- Big Valley Sno Club is a volunteer group that maintains snowmobile trails to ensure that they are properly marked and groomed for everyone's use.

County:

- The International Appalachian Trail (IAT) crosses over the summit of Mars Hill Mountain on its long journey from Baxter State Park to Fort Fairfield, Maine.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.maine tourism.com/places/aroostook-county/recreations-and-attractions/> Accessed April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

<sup>19</sup> <https://thecounty.me/2019/10/12/sports/island-falls-dedicates-new-hiking-trail/> Accessed April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

- Aroostook Valley Trail is approximately a 30-mile trail that connects with the Bangor and Aroostook Trail.<sup>20</sup>

State:

- Maine’s Interconnected Trail System (ITS) for snowmobiling runs through Island Falls, with a trail connector, junction, and main trails offering multi-use seasonal recreation.<sup>21</sup>

**4). A list of important publicly-used open spaces and their associated facilities, such as parking and toilet facilities.**

Location	Facilities
Town Office	Parking, Restrooms
Boat Launches	Parking (Limited)
Mattawamkeag Lake	Seasonal Porta Potty
River Walk Trail (2022 Project)	Parking, Potential Restroom

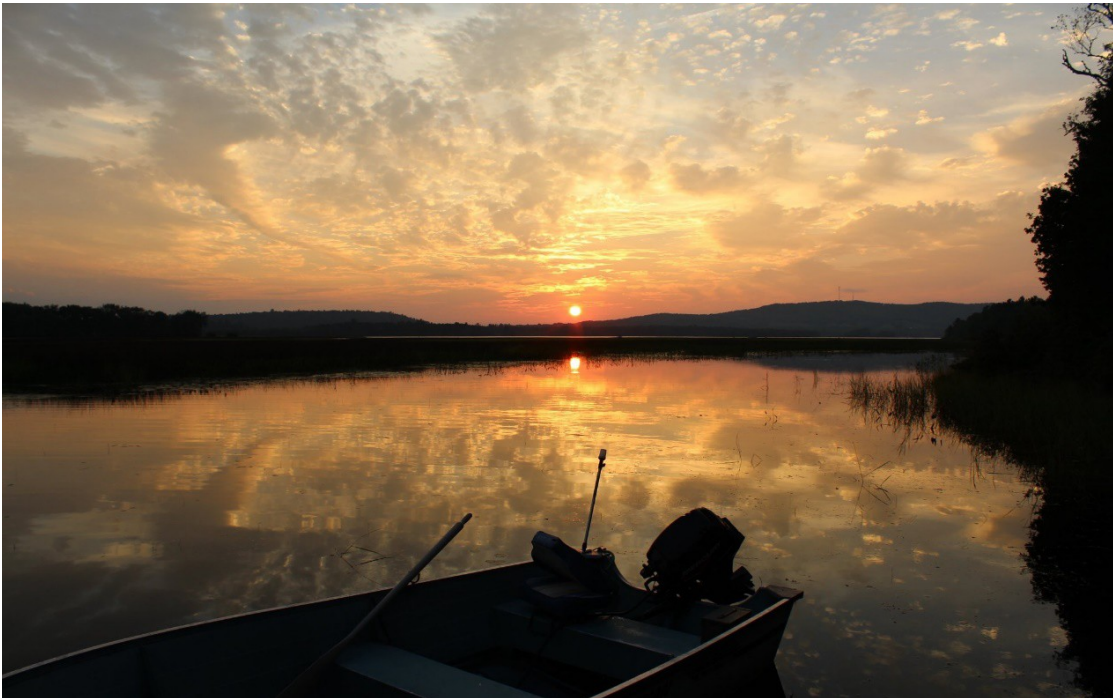
At the Town Office, where the ball fields and starting point for the historic Robinson Mountain Hiking Trail are located, parking is available. Public restrooms are also available when the Town Office is open. In addition to limited parking at local boat launches, a porta potty is accessible at Mattawamkeag Lake during the summer months. A formal easement has been obtained for a plot of land where the River Walk Trail will be developed along with parking and a potential public restroom. In the future, enhancing and increasing access to waterbodies, parking, and bathroom facilities will be of community focus.

<sup>20</sup> <https://visitaroostook.com/story/recreational-trail-systems> Accessed April 26th, 2021.

<sup>21</sup> <https://webapps2.cgis-solutions.com/mainesnowmobile/> Accessed May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

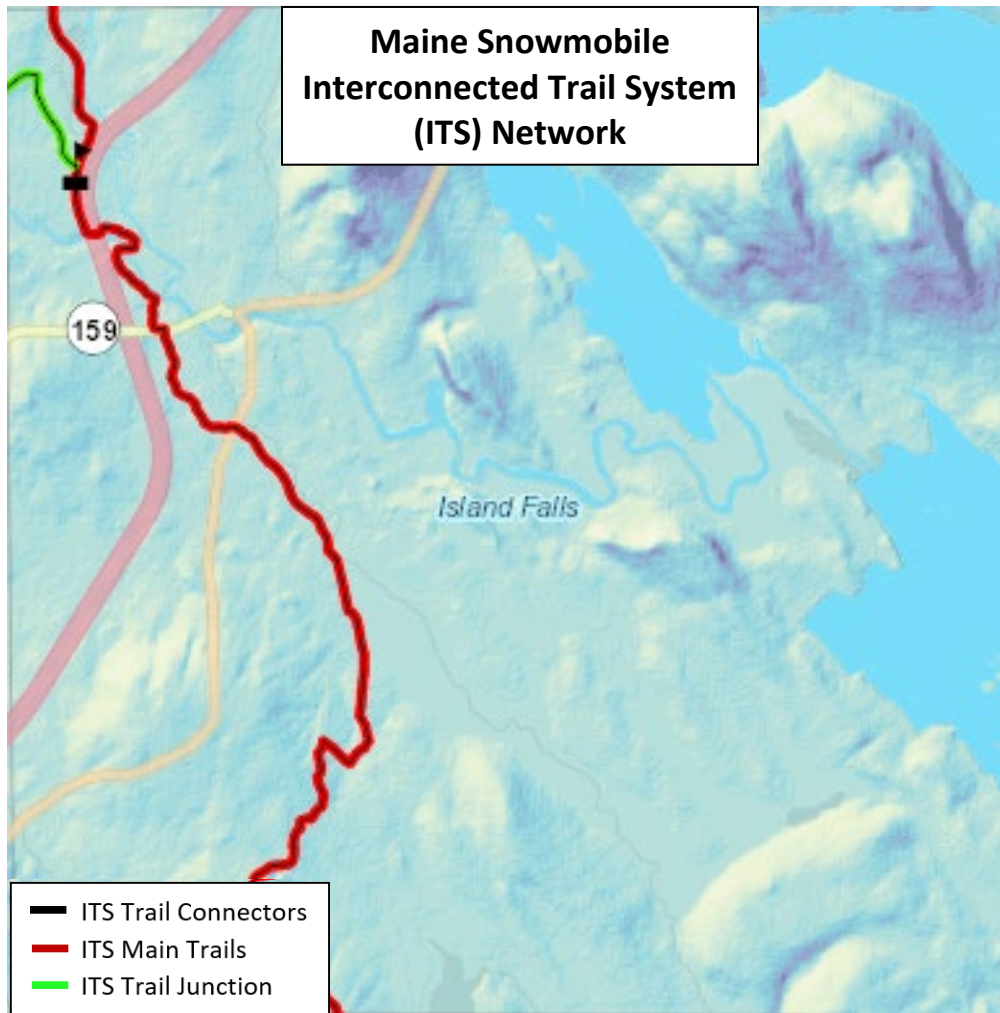


A yoga group from the Sewall House Yoga Retreat poses on the former dam at West Branch Mattawamkeag River in downtown Island Falls.



Sunset at Mattawamkeag Lake.





Source: CGIS, HERE, Garmin, USGS, EPA, NPS, NRCan.

The map above depicts main trails, trail connectors, and trail junctions that run through Island Falls along the Maine Snowmobile Interconnected Trail System (ITS) Network.

## ***Policies***

- 1). To maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.
- 2). To preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.
- 3). Continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.

## ***Strategies***

- 1). Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. Assign a committee or community official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan.
- 2). Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.
- 3). Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.
- 4). Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. § 159-A.

## ***PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES***

### ***Goal***

To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

### ***Local Partnerships, Collective Growth***

Through the sharing of services with other local communities and the identification of improvements to current public facility infrastructure, the Town of Island Falls is ready to support a diverse housing stock and additional businesses. Investments in infrastructure are essential to meeting current and future demands for residential and commercial growth, particularly in the downtown area. To be able to support multi-unit housing and a variety of business types, sewer capacity must be increased. To increase the affordability of community services, the town shares administrative services with the Town of Crystal, a school system with six other municipalities, a fire department with sixteen other municipalities, and solid waste disposal services with the North Katahdin Valley Waste District. By partnering with other municipalities to provide services, community resilience and social capital are strengthened.

### ***Analyses***

#### ***1). Are municipal services adequate to meeting changes in population and demographics?***

According to the most recent data available, in the coming years, the population of Island Falls has been projected to decrease at a gradual pace. Despite population projections, the community has observed an increase in year-round residents and higher school enrollments in the last two years. To continue to support and attract residents and businesses, the community must be able to offer municipal services to support residential, commercial, and industrial development.

While water and electric services are sufficient for current and projected population and demographic change, in order to accommodate future community growth, the town is in need of a public sewer system. Residential and commercial properties in Island Falls currently utilize onsite septic systems for wastewater treatment and disposal. Without a sewer system, development and business attraction in the downtown area is at a standstill. To support the

attraction of residents, a diverse housing stock, and an increase in tourism, the sewer system is essential for community growth.

**2). *Has the community partnered with neighboring communities to share services, reduce costs and/or improve services? In what ways?***

To create efficiencies, the Town Manager of Island Falls has an administrative contract with the Town of Crystal. After closing their Town Office a few years ago, Crystal chose to keep their form of government. The Aroostook County Sheriff and Maine State Police provide police services to Island Falls, where there is no longer a police force. Both entities have access to office space in the Town Office where they can also utilize the gym for training purposes. Despite Island Falls' independent Fire Department and Ambulance Department, due to a mutual aid agreement, neighboring towns assist in emergency situations.

Solid waste disposal is shared with the North Katahdin Valley Waste District.

**3). *If the community has a public sewer system, what issues or concerns are there currently and/or anticipated in the future? Is the sanitary district extension policy consistent with the Future Land Use Plan as required by (38 M.R.S.A. § 1163), or will it be?***

At present, the community relies on private septic systems; there is no public sewer system. There are concerns about failing septic systems and water contamination in local water bodies such as the Mattawamkeag River. In a water quality study conducted by the Maine Rural Water Association in July of 2020, at least one of six contaminant types were detected at four sample locations along the Mattawamkeag River. To mitigate further impacts on water quality, the Town proposes to construct a public sewer system. The sanitary extension district policy will be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan, as required by the State.

The proposed system would be completed in two phases:

- Phase I builds a 10-acre sub-surface treatment facility and services the town's primary travel corridor through the downtown area which includes Crystal Road, Houlton Road, Library Street, and part of Sherman street. The estimated cost is \$6 million.
- Phase II services the remainder of the downtown area. The estimated cost is \$4 million.

Many of the properties in the downtown area are small and do not have adequate space for suitable onsite waste treatment and disposal.

Many of the buildings are vacant and cannot be used for small business or apartments due to inadequate waste treatment based on current standards.

The Mattawamkeag River, which flows through the center of town has recently been upgraded to Class A waters putting further restrictions on business development.

Estimated flow rates are 25,400 gpd for the downtown area and an additional 18,100 gpd from the neighboring residential area. Total wastewater estimated flow is 43,500 gpd with a system design of 52,000 gpd.

The Selectmen have proposed the following connection requirements:

- Connection would be voluntary for single family dwellings
- All businesses must connect
- All multi-family dwellings must connect
- Cesspool and failed septic system dwellings must connect
- All abandoned buildings must connect
- All new construction must connect
- All sold/purchased homes must connect

Note: The last two requirements ensure the entire service area will eventually be connected to the municipal waste treatment system.

***4). If the community has a public water system are any public water supply expansions anticipated? If so, have suitable sources been identified and protected? Is the water district extension policy consistent with the Future Land Use Plan?***

Island Falls' public water system is impressive for a community of its size and one of its biggest selling points. At 500,000 gallons of storage capacity, the system is equipped to supply the town for up to a week if power were lost. With the capability to remove radon and provide clean water for food processing, the system is more than adequate to support future community growth. At present, there are no public water supply expansions anticipated.

***5). If the town does not have a public sewer or water system, is this preventing the community from accommodating current and projected growth?***

Without a public sewer system, the development of the downtown area and the attraction of businesses are at a standstill. A public sewer system is

essential for local economic development and supporting residential and commercial growth. Providing increased sewage capacity will expand opportunities for community growth.

**6). Are existing stormwater management facilities adequately maintained? What improvements are needed? How might future development affect the existing system?**

Yes, they are adequately maintained. The Town has a number of stormwater drains that are monitored for their impacts to local waterbodies. Island Falls works with Maine Lakes, an entity that supports projects that minimize stormwater runoff and prioritize water quality preservation. Future development may result in intensified usage of stormwater drains and likelihood of contaminants. The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance provides protection by stating that “agricultural activities involving tillage or soil greater than 40,000 square feet in surface area within the shoreland zone shall require a Conservation Plan to be filed with the Planning Board.”

**7). How do residents dispose of septic tank waste? Are there issues or concerns regarding septic tank waste?**

Local contractors spread septic tank waste on the town septage field. There are currently no concerns regarding this method of disposal. The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance requires that subsurface sewage disposal systems be installed in conformance with the State of Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules.

**8). Is school construction or expansion anticipated during the planning period? Are there opportunities to promote new residential development around existing and proposed schools?**

Southern Aroostook Community School (SACS) located in RSU 50 in Dyer Brook, provides elementary, middle, and high school learning for the towns of Crystal, Dyer Brook, Hersey, Island Falls, Merrill, Oakfield, and Smyrna. Between 2020 and 2021, tax-funded school renovations are anticipated. Land is available for residential development in the towns served by the school district and may attract families that desire to live in close proximity to the education system. According to the U.S News and World Report, SACS ranked number six as one of Maine’s best high schools in 2021<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/maine/rankings> Accessed August 1, 2021.

**9). Is the community's emergency response system adequate? Are improvements needed?**

The Town has an all-volunteer Fire Department that is managed by a Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Captain, and Lieutenant. The Fire Department has three fire trucks including one brush truck equipped to access remote areas. In addition to three EMTs, the Ambulance Department is managed by an EMS Director and Assistant Director. To support the Department's operations, there are two equipped diesel ambulances; a 2021 Ford and a 2016 Chevy. As stated previously, Island Falls no longer has a police force. The Aroostook County Sheriff and Maine State Police provide this service.

In terms of improvements, the local Fire and Ambulance Departments face challenges with coverage and staffing.

As a result, wait times of individuals in need of emergency response services may be impacted. At present, the Ambulance Department is in the process of expanding their team of EMTs and paramedics and utilizing grant funding to make updates to their building. The Fire Department would also benefit from infrastructural updates. To enhance emergency response communications, one of the two ambulances is in need of a new audio system.

**10). Is the solid waste management system meeting current needs? Is the community reducing the reliance on waste disposal and increasing recycling opportunities? Are improvements needed to meet future demand?**

The solid waste management system is adequate to meet the current needs of the community. Private companies collect residential waste. Private sewer systems are not sufficient to support growth and economic development initiatives. A public sewer system with increased sewage capacity is an essential investment for community expansion and long-term prosperity.

**11). Are improvements needed in the telecommunications and energy infrastructure?**

Currently, the community has access to 4G cellular coverage, which is adequate to support the connectivity of current and future residents. Despite the continual need for broadband access, it is not feasible for some individuals residing in more rural parts of town. Increasing the reliability and affordability of internet access is essential to support remote workers, education, and healthcare.

In 2019, Island Falls installed LED streetlights that provide the capability to install a WiFi network through the system. Through embracing innovative

technology, the community will benefit from increased internet access and the sharing of information.

**12). Are local and regional health care facilities and public health and social service programs adequate to meet the needs of the community?**

More health services are needed in town, including dental, eye care, and a general practitioner. Having a consistent in-town doctor would increase the convenience and accessibility of healthcare to local residents. Providing adequate medical facilities is critical to supporting the community, particularly the aging population.

**13). Will other public facilities, such as town offices, libraries, and cemeteries accommodate projected growth?**

Island Falls has numerous public facilities to accommodate future growth in the community. Recent upgrades include a new extension of the Katahdin Public Library, where free WiFi is accessible to visitors desiring to connect to the internet. At the Municipal Building, the gym, public restrooms, meeting rooms, and the business office will be soon be upgraded. Plans are in the process of being developed for the construction of a new playground on the Town Office property. Increased community engagement is needed in the Recreation Department so a more structured program with scheduled activities can be offered to residents. To enhance accessibility measures for elderly residents, in the gym's 2019 upgrade, a ramp was added for easier access. Currently, renovations are underway to put in security features in the Town Office and upgrade the public restrooms and hallways.

**14). To what extent are investments in facility improvements directed to growth areas?**

Identified facility improvements, most of which are in the downtown area, are located in closest proximity to the single-family dwelling growth area along Sherman Street. Growth is not expected to occur where the majority of facilities in need of improvements happen to be located (e.g. Town Office, Fire Department, etc.), although the downtown area is expected to experience growth as revitalization efforts are made. To attract more business for the downtown and Main Street area, an engineering project has been developed for an Island Community Park.

**15). Does the community have a street tree program?**

Island Falls does not currently have a street tree program; however, the Town



does support the preservation and protection of its green spaces, lands and natural resources. The American Chestnut Foundation has expressed an interest in planting Chestnut trees in the downtown area.

## ***Conditions and Trends***

### ***1). Location of facilities and service areas (mapped as appropriate);***

In the “Island Falls Facilities” map below, the library, various services are mapped, including cemeteries, boat launches, railroads, waterbodies, wetlands, U.S. routes, state routes, and localroads.

### ***2). General physical condition of facilities and equipment;***

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Condition</b>
Boat Launches	Good
Cemetery	Good
Fire/Ambulance Department	2021 Renovations/Good, Audio System Repair Needed
Katahdin Public Library	Good
Municipal Building	2021 Renovations
Water Dept. Station	Good

### ***3). Capacity and anticipated demand during the planning period;***

The community anticipates an increase in demand for public facilities during the next 10-12 years. Following the closure of the starch factory, which had water-intensive operations, the demand for water declined. However, the sizeable capacity of the public water system is equipped to add more customers, including residences and businesses. Upon completion of the future public sewer system, the community will be ready to attract and retain new businesses and individuals, and support more multi-unit housing projects.

### ***4). Identification of who owns/manages the systems;***

Island Falls manages and maintains the town roads, water department, fire department, ambulance department, and boat launches.

### ***5). Estimated costs of needed capital improvements to public facilities; and the following information related to each of these public facilities and services:***

These costs are listed in the Capital Investment Plan located in the Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan chapter.

***a. Sewerage and/or Water Supply – Identify number and types of users, and percent of households served.***

Approximately 140 households are water customers. The addition of the public sewer system will provide the community with increased waste disposal capabilities and opportunities for residential and business development.

***b. Septage – Identify any community policies or regulations regarding septage collection and disposal.***

The Island Falls septage field is situated at a location approved by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP). The State of Maine regulates the site and ensures compliance with the Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules authored by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

***c. Solid Waste – Describe the community’s solid waste management system. Identify types and mounts of municipal solid waste and recycled materials for the past five (5) years.***

Solid waste is disposed of at Northern Katahdin Valley Waste Disposal District (NKVWDD) located in Dyer Brook and serves as a transfer and recycling center. NKVWDD serves eleven communities, including Amity, Crystal, Dyer Brook, Hammond, Hersey, Island Falls, Merrill, Moro, Mount Chase, New Limerick, Patten, as well as several unorganized townships. Residents can dispose of their household garbage themselves or have it picked up on a weekly basis by a trash removal service.

***d. Stormwater Management – Identify combined sewer overflows. For Municipal Separate Stormwater System (MS4) communities, describe plan and status of the major goals of the MS4 requirements.***

There is no public sewer system at present, so combined sewer overflows are not applicable.

***e. Power and Communications – Availability of 3-phase power, Internet (including broadband), and cable within the community.***

Within the Town, residents have access to three-phase power, internet,

broadband and cable. The Federal Communications Commission defines broadband as any connection that provides 25 megabits per second (mbps) for downloads and 4 mbps for uploads, whereas the State of Maine defines broadband as a symmetrical (same speed for downloads and uploads) connection of 10 mbps.<sup>23</sup> In a study conducted by ConnectME on broadband availability, out of the 15 test locations, 47% had download speeds between 0-10 mbps and 53% had upload speeds below 3 mbps. These statistics emphasize the need for more high speed and reliable internet access in Island Falls. In the Capital Investment Plan, “High Speed Broadband” is identified as an upcoming investment around the year 2023. The State offers a variety of grant opportunities through entities such as ConnectME to fund the expansion of broadband access in Maine communities. Greater access to internet and broadband expands opportunities for economic development and assists in the attraction and retention of young families and businesses in rural communities.

***f. Emergency Response System – Average call response times for fire, police, and emergency/rescue.***

***Island Falls Fire Department:*** Island Falls Fire Department provides services for up to 17 towns local to Island Falls. Their in-town response time averages 10-12 minutes.

***Aroostook County Sheriff’s Department:*** An Aroostook County deputy resides in close proximity to Island Falls. Depending on where the on-duty officer(s) is located in the service zone, response times are typically between 20-40 minutes, or up to an hour.

***g. Education – Identify school administrative unit. Include primary/secondary schoolsystem enrollment for the most recent year information is available and for the ten (10) years after the anticipated adoption of plan.***

The Town of Island Falls is part of RSU 50 located in Dyer Brook. The Town elects two members to the School Board Committee.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/connectme/sites/maine.gov.connectme/files/inline-files/communityguidetobroadband.pdf>  
Accessed April 20, 2021.

Southern Aroostook Community School (SACS) serves the towns of Crystal, Dyer Brook, Hersey, Island Falls, Merrill, Oakfield, and Smyrna at SACS Elementary School and Southern Aroostook Middle/High School.<sup>24</sup>

The Regional School Unit is managed independently from the town government, but must submit a budget for voter approval.

In 2021, SACS, which provides elementary, middle and high school education, enrolled 339 students. The unit's 10-year average enrollment equals 354.10 students.

***h. Health Care – Describe major health care facilities (hospitals, clinics) and other providers serving the community. Identify public health and social services supported by the community through municipal subsidy.***

- Katahdin Valley Health Center – Island Falls Clinic
- Houlton Regional Hospital (Houlton)
- Milliken Medical Center (Patten)

***i. Municipal Government Facilities and Services – Describe facilities and staffing for municipal, administrative, enforcement, and public works operations.***

Board of Selectmen – The Town of Island Falls operates under a Select Board and Town Manager form of government. The 5 members of the select board are elected on staggered 3-year terms. The Board of Selectmen is the official governing body for the town. The Selectmen meet every other Wednesday at 4:30pm at the Municipal Building.

Town Manager – The Town Manager is the chief administrative officer of the Town of Island Falls, and is responsible for the management of all town affairs as provided for in the Town Charter. The Town Manager oversees each of the town departments, and is responsible for their performance. Some responsibilities include overseeing day-to-day operations, hiring, supervising, and evaluating town personnel, and preparing the annual municipal budget.

Town Clerk – The Town Clerk is an appointed position also located in the Town Office. The Clerk's mission is to accurately maintain all town records including vital statistics, conduct elections with professionalism

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-reporting/reporting/warehouse/enrollment> Accessed June 20, 2021.

in accordance with State Law, issue State and Town licenses and permits, and provide information to both Town Officials and the general public in a friendly, efficient, and confidential manner.

Other responsibilities of the Town Clerk include issuing licenses and permits, serving as Voter Registrar, and assisting in the preparation of Annual Town Reports.

Deputy Town Clerk – The Deputy Town Clerk works in the Town Office and assists the Town Manager and Town Clerk with their duties. This is an appointed position.

Other Appointed Municipal Officers, Boards, and Committees – Code Enforcement Officer, Animal Control Officer, Tax Assessor, Planning Board, Economic Development Advisory Committee, Budget Committee, Roads Committee, Forestry Committee, and the Cemetery Committee.

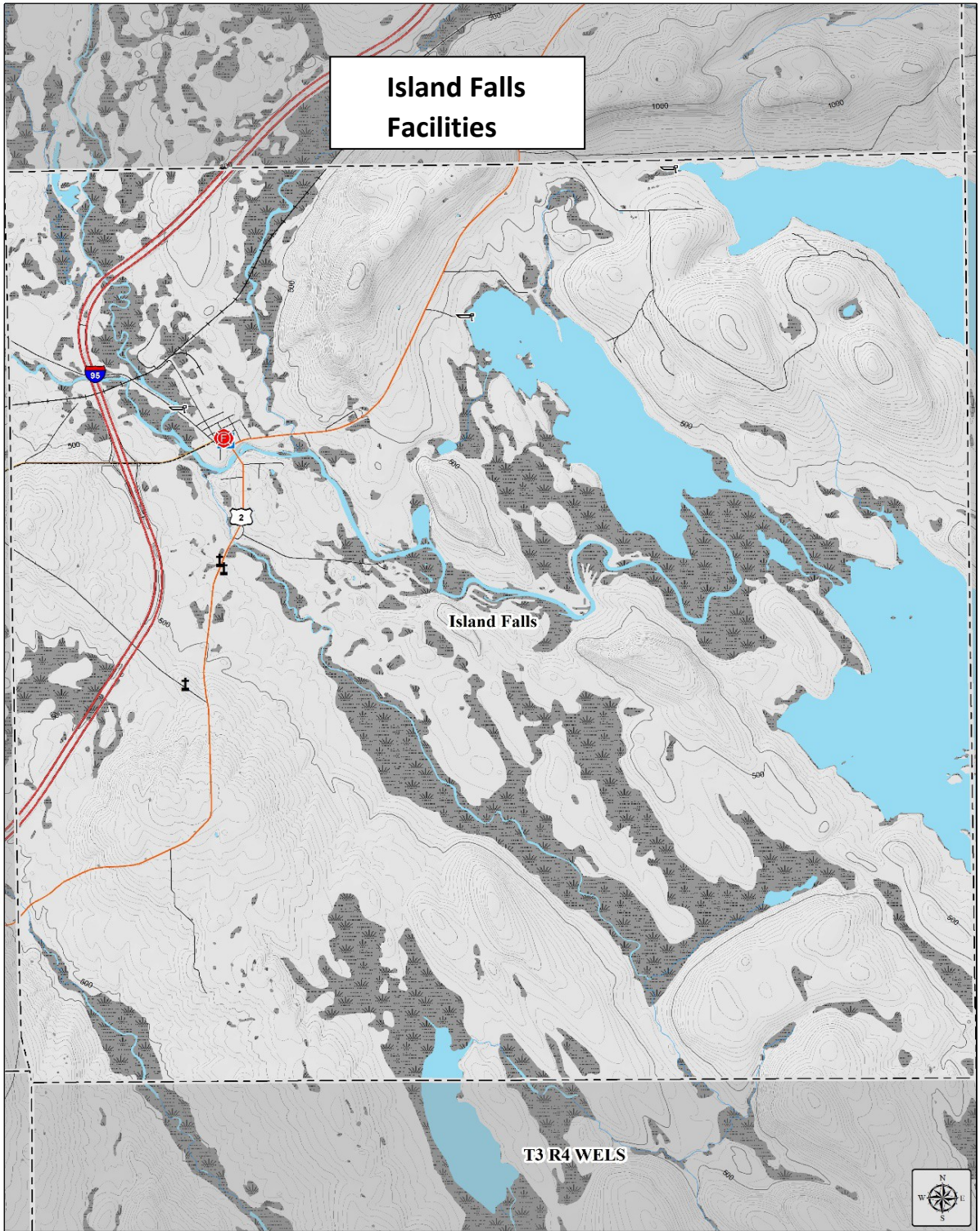
Police – Island Falls no longer has a police force. The Aroostook County Sheriff and Maine State Police provide this service.

Fire and Ambulance Department – As mentioned previously, the all-volunteer Fire Department is managed by a Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Captain, and Lieutenant. It has three fire trucks including one brush truck equipped to access remote areas. The Ambulance Department is managed by an EMS Director and Assistant Director. There are eight additional EMTs. To support the services they provide, the department has two equipped diesel ambulances.

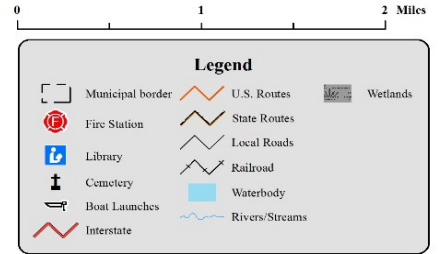
Roads Committee – The Roads Committee evaluates the conditions of the Town roads, develops a multi-year strategy, prioritizes the current needs, and submits an annual plan to the Select Board for budgeting and approval.

***j. Street Tree Program – Describe the community's street tree program.***

As stated previously, Island Falls does not currently have a street tree program; however, the Town does support the preservation and protection of its green spaces, lands and natural resources.



**Island Falls Infrastructure**  
 Source Data: USDA, MEGIS, Maine DACF  
 Projection: UTM, NAD83, Zone 19, Meters  
 Produced by: Municipal Planning Assistance Program, DACF  
 April 2020



## ***Policies***

- 1). To efficiently meet identified public facility and service needs.
- 2). To provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports growth and development in identified growth areas.

## ***Strategies***

- 1). Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate the community's anticipated growth and changing demographics.
- 2). Locate new public facilities comprising at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas.
- 3). Encourage local sewer and water districts to coordinate planned service extension with the Future Land Use Plan.
- 4). If public water supply expansion is anticipated, identify and protect suitable sources.
- 5). Explore options for regional delivery of local services.

# ***FISCAL CAPACITY AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN***

## ***Goal***

To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

## ***Financing Future Growth***

A significant component of planning for future growth is determining which capital investments are most essential for achieving the community's vision. The next step is to consider sources for how the capital investments will be funded, whether that be grants, donations, etc. In Island Falls, a public sewer system, island park development, and school renovations are identified as significant investments for supporting and advancing future growth. By having a Comprehensive Plan that is found consistent with the Growth Management Act by the State of Maine, the community will be given preferential consideration when applying for state grant programs. In turn, this will assist the community in funding their capital investment projects.

## ***Analyses***

### ***1). How will future capital investments in the plan be funded?***

Capital investments refer to the expenditure of municipal funds of \$20,000 or more to purchase assets of land, machinery, equipment, or buildings. There are a variety of capital investments that the Town of Island Falls has identified as being priority projects in their Capital Investment Plan. Projects related to outdoor recreation, broadband expansion, building revitalization, and public sewage will be funded in numerous ways, including bank loans, municipal low interest loans, a Forestry Reserve Account, donations, volunteer labor, tax funding, private funding, and state and municipal grants.

### ***2). If the community plans to borrow to pay for capital investments, does the community have sufficient borrowing capacity to obtain the necessary funds?***

The Capital Investment Plan identifies capital investments of \$20,000 or more that are anticipated over the planning period (10 years minimum). If the community approves the projects listed in the Plan, the diverse funding sources



(e.g. state grants, municipal grants, donations, etc.) enhance borrowing capacity and increase the likelihood of project completion.

**3). Have efforts been made by the community to participate in or explore sharing capital investments with neighboring communities? If so, what efforts have been made?**

In the spring of 2021, as part of the Working Communities Challenge (WCC), an initiative led by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, eight recipients of \$25,000 design grants were announced, one of which being the Katahdin Region.<sup>25</sup> Recipients of the \$25,000 design grants are teams of municipalities from across the state of Maine that will utilize the grant funding to develop and propose projects that will strengthen regional community and economic development. Following the Design Phase, five teams will be selected and awarded three-year, \$375,000 grants to bring their projects to life. If selected, the Katahdin Region will focus on enhancing the outdoor economy and creating jobs that attract and retain young workers.

**Conditions and Trends**

**1). Identify community revenues and expenditures by category for the last five (5) years and explain trends.**

**Revenues**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Property Tax	\$1,439,239	\$1,441,792	\$1,513,784	\$1,653,435	\$1,650,732
Excise Taxes	\$122,271	\$123,757	\$145,180	\$141,004	\$139,983
Intergovernmental	\$119,852	\$154,033	\$173,581	\$185,638	\$330,082
Grants	---	---	\$125,000	\$85,000	\$135,125
Service Charges	\$15,648	\$11,459	\$37,650	\$31,152	\$37,701
Investment Income	\$1,549	\$1,300	\$1,080	\$3,306	\$5,224
Interest & Lien Fees	\$34,209	\$28,429	\$22,870	\$19,194	\$30,481
Licenses & Permits	\$2,337	\$1,931	---	\$1,656	---
Other	\$11,630	\$38,536	\$297,121	\$37,200	\$236,208
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,746,736</b>	<b>\$1,801,237</b>	<b>\$2,315,266</b>	<b>\$2,197,585</b>	<b>\$2,430,411</b>

Source: Town of Island Falls

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.bostonfed.org/workingplaces/news/2021/maine-working-cities-challenge-announce-8-grant-finalists.aspx>  
 Accessed July 2, 2021.

## Expenditures

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
General Government	\$276,281	\$217,764	\$238,606	\$262,202	280,448
Public Works	\$272,393	\$335,221	\$199,253	\$369,859	278,044
Public Safety	\$54,656	\$68,562	\$60,281	\$89,523	110,506
Health & Sanitation	\$21,966	\$33,475	\$32,177	\$23,703	21,073
Education	\$795,532	\$805,142	\$831,817	\$862,125	882,854
County Tax	\$77,481	\$80,225	\$88,565	\$90,372	103,071
Debt Service	\$19,572	\$12,723	\$6,461	\$9,031	107,224
Recreation	---	\$13,179	\$22,743	\$15,789	23,774
Capital Expenditures/Special Projects	---	---	---	\$227,382	795,697
Unclassified	\$78,782	\$109,083	\$38,246	\$16,053	15,351
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,596,661</b>	<b>\$1,675,374</b>	<b>\$1,518,150</b>	<b>\$1,966,039</b>	<b>2,618,043</b>

Source: Town of Island Falls

Between FY 2016 and FY 2020, municipal revenues increased, with an exception of FY 2019 when community revenues decreased by \$117,681 before increasing again in FY 2020, surpassing total revenues in FY 2018, the year during which total revenues had been the highest in the five-year window. Overall, municipal revenues increased by nearly 40% between FY 2016 and FY 2020.

Across the five-year window, on an annual basis, Island Falls expended the most capital on education. For example, in FY 2018, the community spent close to 55% of their total yearly expenditures on education. Between FY 2016 and FY 2020, municipal expenditures increased by approximately 64% overall. Capital Expenditures/Special Projects in FY 2019 and FY 2020 expended approximately 12% and 30% of total expenditures, respectively.

**2). Describe means of funding capital items (reserve funds, bonding, etc.) and identify any outside funding sources.**

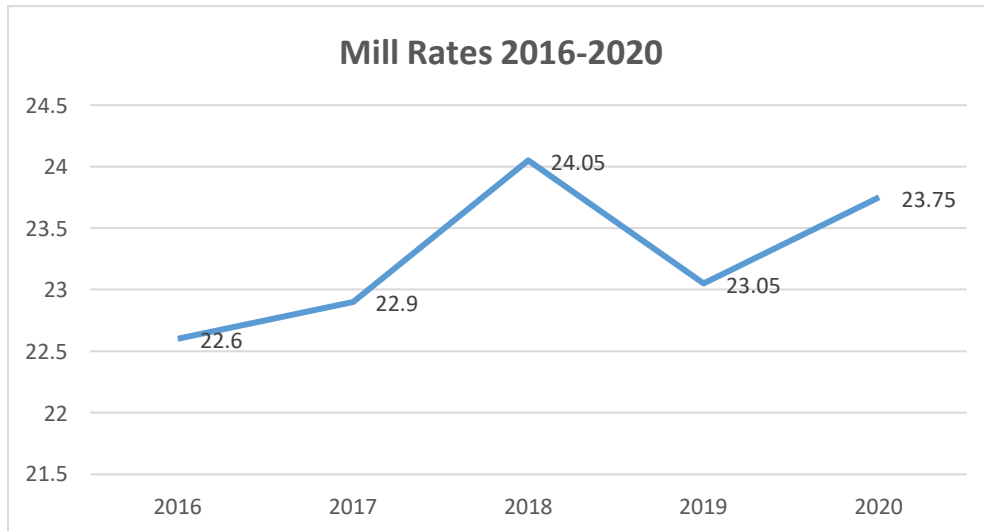
The items listed in the Capital Investment Plan below will be accomplished by utilizing a variety of funding mechanisms, including municipal grants, donations, volunteer labor, municipal low interest loans, and a Forest Reserve Account. Outside funding to achieve anticipated capital investments will be sourced from state grants, bank loans, and private funders for projects such as “High Speed Broadband”, “Additional Assisted Living Housing, and “Business Park Development.”

**3). Identify local and state valuations and local mill rates for the last five (5) years.**

The mill rate is the amount of tax levied per \$1,000 of assessed value. From 2016-2020, Island Falls’ mill rate increased by 5%. After peaking in 2018 at 24.05, the mill rate decreased slightly to 23.05 in 2019 before increasing to 23.75 in 2020.

**Mill Rates 2016-2020**

Year	Mill Rate
2016	22.6
2017	22.9
2018	24.05
2019	23.05
2020	23.75

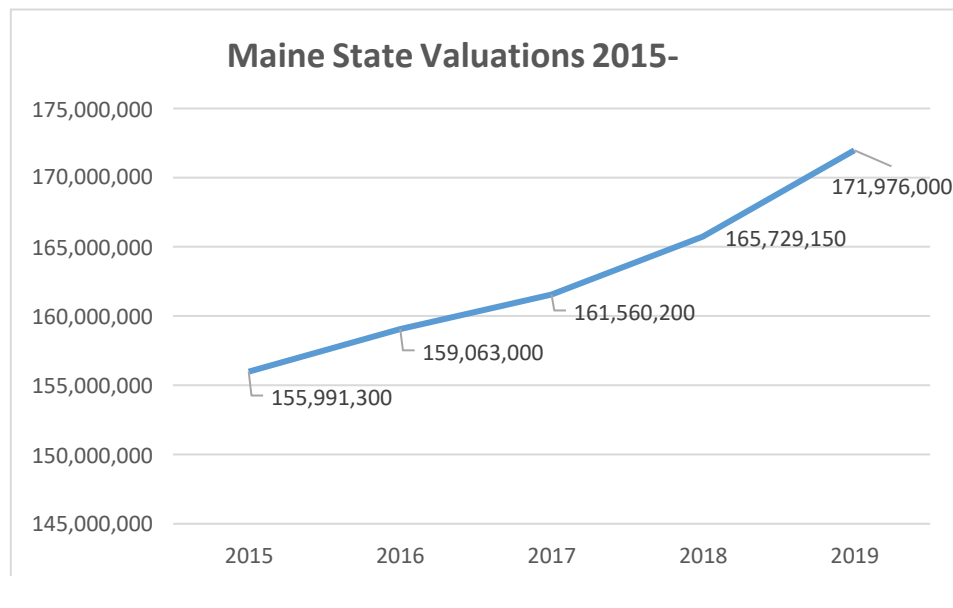


Source: Maine Revenue Services

**Municipal Valuations 2015-2019**

Year	Commitment	Mill Rate	Total Taxable Municipal Valuation	Taxable Land Valuation	Taxable Buildings Valuation	Total Taxable Personal Property
2019	\$1,648,571	23.05	\$71,521,503	\$35,562,400	\$34,728,150	\$1,230,953
2018	\$1,561,514	24.05	\$64,927,821	\$29,231,000	\$34,588,550	\$1,108,271
2017	\$1,433,861	22.90	\$62,614,017	\$26,568,200	\$34,893,550	\$1,152,267
2016	\$1,444,482	22.60	\$63,915,146	\$26,709,000	\$36,100,750	\$1,105,396
2015	\$1,379,606	21.35	\$64,618,550	\$26,898,900	\$36,573,450	\$1,146,200

Source: Maine Revenue Services



Source: Maine Revenue

After steadily decreasing by approximately \$1 million annually between FY 2015 and FY 2017, Island Falls’ total taxable municipal valuation followed an upwards trajectory in FY 2018 and FY2019 – an 11% increase in five years. In comparison, the State of Maine’s valuation similarly increased by 10% over the same time period.

**4). How does total municipal debt (including shares of county, school and utility) compare with the statutory and Maine Bond Bank recommended limits on such debt?**

In FY 2020, Island Falls’ indebtedness was divided between governmental activities and business-type activities. The total balance for long-term debt was \$1,215,991, 60% of which accounted for governmental activities, while the remaining liabilities were comprised of 30% business-type activities and 10% interest. In accordance with the State of Maine, the town is subject to a statutory limitation of its general long-term debt equal to 15% of the State’s valuation of the town. Following the 2021 state valuation of Island Falls which totaled \$81,950,000, the town’s long-term debt is well below the statutory limit of \$12,292,500.

<b>Town of Island Falls Capital Investment Plan</b>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Estimated Timing</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources &amp; Mechanisms</b>	<b>Municipal Growth-Related Capital Investment</b>
Purchase remaining 12.5% of town forest land	\$770,000	2021	Forestry Reserve Account, Bank loan	
Town Office Equipment Garage	\$85,000	2021	Tax Funded	
Phase 2 of Town Office Renovations	\$150,000	2021	Municipal grant	✓
Fire Department Renovations	\$85,000	2021	Municipal grant	✓
Phase 1 Island Recreational Park	\$100,000	2022	Various grants and volunteer labor	✓
Playground Area Upgrades	\$75,000	2022-2024	Various grants and volunteer labor	✓
Community Walking Trails	\$30,000	2022	Various grants and volunteer labor	✓
Phase 3 of Town Office Renovations	\$300,000	2023	Municipal grant	✓
High Speed Broadband	\$500,000	2023	State grant	✓
Historic Jail Renovations	\$100,000	2021 - 2024	Various grants and volunteer labor	
Starch Factory Purchase	\$500,000	2022 -2023	Various grants and reserve account	
Mattawamkeag Lake Roll Dam	\$250,000	2022 - 2024	Donations, grant, and volunteer labor	
Overall Downtown Upgrade	\$500,000	2022 - 2026	Various grants and volunteer labor	
Phase 1 of Public Sewer System	\$6,000,000	2022 -2024	Various grants and municipal low interest loan	✓
Restrooms for Community Hiking Trails	\$100,000	2023 - 2024	Various grants	✓
Phase 2 of Public Sewer System	\$4,000,000	2024 - 2026	Various grants and municipal low interest loan	✓
Additional Assisted Living Housing	\$5,000,000	2028 - 2031	Privately funded	
Business Park Development	\$10,000,000	2030 - 2031	Privately funded	
RSU 50 School Renovations	\$5,000,000	2030 - 2031	Tax Funded	

Over the next decade, the Town of Island Falls anticipates completing numerous capital investment projects to advance local infrastructure, including improvements to municipal buildings and schools, and the expansion of recreational trails, broadband, housing, and public facilities. Installation of the future public sewer system and business park development represent two projects that will require the highest expense at \$10 million each, followed by school renovations and additional assisted living housing at \$5 million each. Broadband expansion, renovations of an historic jail, the purchase of the local Starch Factory, and the development of the Island Recreational Park are among the capital investments that are expected to cost \$500,000 or less to complete.

In the Capital Investment Plan, projects are organized by their estimated year of completion and funding priority. Over 60% of anticipated investments will require one or two years to reach completion. The remaining 40% of projects will be completed within three or four years. Projects taking longer durations of time to complete include the public sewer system installation, historic jail renovations, construction of additional assisted living housing, and an overall upgrade of the downtown. Funding for the projects will be primarily sourced from the municipality, state, taxes, private funders, through which grants and volunteer labor will be sought.

Among the community's anticipated investments, general funding priorities are to increase broadband access, expand recreational trails, construct an Island recreational park, renovate the regional school, upgrade the downtown area, and update public facilities and service buildings, including the town office and fire department. In addition to enhancing local economic development and supporting education, the completion of these projects will support the aging population and delivery of public services.

### ***Policies***

- 1). To finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost-effective manner.
- 2). To explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community.
- 3). To reduce Maine's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.

### ***Strategies***

- 1). Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan or and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.

## **EXISTING LAND USE**

### ***Inventory of Current Land Use***

A comprehensive analysis of how land is utilized today provides a snapshot of past land use, historical industries, and former drivers of the local economy. Analyzing current land use also highlights community composition and shapes the progression of future land use, whether that means increased land conservation and natural resource protection or the development of residential, commercial, and industrial lots and structures.

### ***Analyses***

#### ***1). Is most of the recent development occurring: lot by lot; in subdivisions; or in planned developments? Is recent development consistent with the community's vision?***

Recent development in Island Falls has consisted of a mix between lot-by-lot and subdivisions. In shoreland areas, lot-by-lot residential development is common. There is a growing interest in increasing the number of apartments in town, which will diversify the housing stock available to individuals and families seeking to relocate to Island Falls. Prioritizing the diversity and affordability of housing will increase the likelihood of attracting and retaining individuals that may not otherwise be able to afford or desire to own a single-family home.

Island Falls' vision has a focus on growth while also recognizing the area's history and heritage. Recent development in town supports growth while also observing local ordinances. In order for growth to continue to occur, needs and priorities related to community and economic development must be regularly reviewed.

#### ***2). What regulatory and non-regulatory measures would help promote development of character, and in locations that are consistent with the community's vision?***

Island Falls' character is shaped by the significant natural resources, water resources, and historic properties in the community. Regulatory protection through conservation easements, the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, and properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, ensures the sustainability of local waterbodies, significant wildlife habitats, and historic buildings.

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Continual regulatory support from the Department of Agriculture, Conservation

and Forestry (DACF), Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and non-regulatory support from the Maine Natural Areas Program (DACF), Nature Conservancy, Aroostook County Conservation Association, Island Falls Lakes Association, and Island Falls Historical Society, will foster community growth while maintaining the continual protection and recognition of local natural, aquatic, and historical resources.

**3). *Is the community’s administrative capacity adequate to manage its land use regulation program, including planning board and code enforcement officer?***

In addition to a town manager, code enforcement officer, Board of Selectmen, and Planning Board, Island Falls has an Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) that promotes the economic interests of the town and region. The joint efforts of these individuals and committees promote collaboration and strengthen the community’s readiness to manage the ordinances that regulate land use.

**4). *Are floodplains adequately identified and protected? Does the community participate in the National Flood Insurance Program?***

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Island Falls is one of many Maine municipalities that participate in the National Floodplain Management Program.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the community’s participation in the Program is priority. As the state adopts climate adaptation strategies, Island Falls should consider their own strategies to increase resilience against flooding and other climate related challenges.

## ***Conditions and Trends***

**1). *An existing land use map, by land use classification (such as mixed-use, residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, agricultural, commercial forests, marine, park/recreational, conserved, and undeveloped land).***

Island Falls’ Zoning Map is below.

**2). *A summary of current lot dimensional standards.***

Located in the table below.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/flood/> Accessed June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021.



**3). A description identifying the location of lots and primary structures created within the last ten years. Include residential, institutional, commercial, and industrial development.**

Within the last decade, most development of lots and primary structure has been for residential and commercial purposes. In the area north of Upper Mattawamkeag Lake and south of Pleasant Lake (land area between both lakes), there has been significant residential development. Similar to other communities with lake access, there is a high desirability to own lakefront property in Island Falls. In terms of growth in other areas, commercial development has increased in the area directly east of the Interstate 95 ramp. With convenient access to Interstate 95, commercial development is projected to continue in this area in the years ahead.

**4). Provide a brief description of existing land use regulations and other tools utilized to manage land use, including shoreland zoning, floodplain management, subdivision, site plan review, and zoning ordinances.**

Within the community, land use is primarily regulated through the Land Use Ordinance and Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. In addition to a Site Design Review Ordinance, Subdivision Review Ordinance, and Junkyards, Automobile Graveyards, and Trash Ordinance, the Land Use Ordinance contains lot dimensional standards and land use protection for each of the five land use districts – Residential, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, and Limited Commercial, the subdivision review process, buffer areas, performance standards, and general requirements for land use activities within the town.

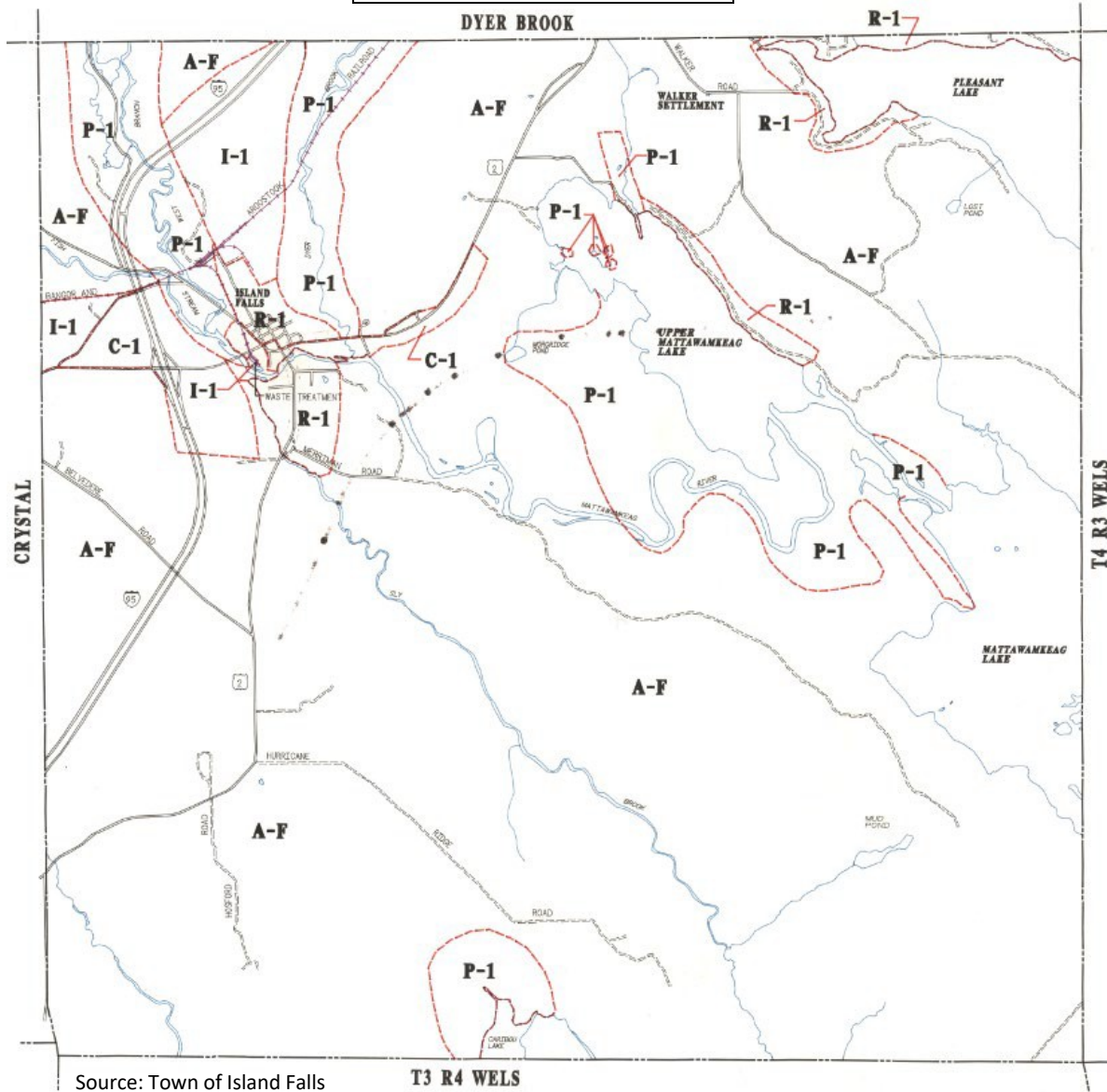
In the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, regulations for the protection and preservation of the community's lakes, ponds, and rivers support high water quality and the mitigation of stormwater runoff.

**5). Estimate the minimum amount of land needed to accommodate projected residential, institutional, commercial, or industrial development at least ten (10) years into the future.**

Over the next decade, the municipality expects to add commercial and residential development to its current stock of such lots and buildings. On Sewall Street, there is potential for 10-30 acres of new residential development in addition to 10 half-acre lots on Pleasant Street, totaling up to 35 acres. Located east of Interstate 95 and west of the downtown area, approximately 25 acres is available for commercial and/or residential growth. Commercial businesses that may locate in Island Falls include a gas station, laundromat, motel, convenience store, bakery, and restaurants. To meet the needs of the aging population, the

local retirement village has the potential to double its current land area, expanding opportunities to provide better access to healthcare services for current and future residents.

# Island Falls Zoning Map



Source: Town of Island Falls

**LEGEND:**

- PAVED ROADS
- UNIMPROVED ROADS
- RAILROADS
- POWER LINES
- ZONING BOUNDARIES
- P-1** PROTECTION DISTRICT
- R-1** RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
- A-F** AGRICULTURAL/FOREST DISTRICT
- C-1** COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
- I-1** INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

**SCALE:**

0      1000      2000      3000      4000      5000

## Island Falls Lot Dimensional Requirements

### Table Legend

Res	Residential
Agr	Agricultural
Comm	Commercial
Ind	Industrial
Limited Comm	Limited Commercial

Zoning District	Res	Agr	Comm	Ind	Limited Comm
<b>Minimum Road Frontage</b>					
Without Sanitary Sewer	200'	200'	40'	40'	40'
With Sanitary Sewer	200'	200'	40'	40'	40'
<b>Minimum Yard Dimensions</b>					
Front Setback (edge of road to building)	15'	15'	8'	8'	8'
Side Setback - Principal Building	15'	15'	5'	5'	5'
Side Setback - Accessory Building	15'	15'	5'	5'	5'
Rear Setback - Principal Building	15'	15'	15'	15'	15'
Rear Setback - Accessory Building	15'	10'	10'	10'	10'
<b>Visibility At Corner Lots</b>					
Visibility Measured Along the Intersection Road Lines	25'	25'	25'	25'	25'
<b>Minimum Lot Size</b>					
Village with public sewage	1/4 Acre	---	---	---	---

Source: Island Falls Land Use Ordinance

All proposed land uses, lots and structures shall meet or exceed the above minimum lot dimensional requirements of the District in which the proposed use, lot or structure is located.

## Shoreland Zone Waterfront Lot Dimensional Standards

<b>Water body/Great Pond</b>	<b>Structural Setback</b>	<b>Minimum Frontage</b>
Mattawamkeag Lake	100'	200'
Pleasant Lake	100'	200'
Caribou Lake	100'	200'

Three waterbodies – Mattawamkeag Lake, Pleasant Lake, and Caribou Lake - are designated as Great Ponds. Structural setbacks of 100 feet and minimum frontage requirements of 200 feet are protective measures for these waterbodies of natural and cultural resource significance.

## ***FUTURE LAND USE PLAN***

### ***Goal***

To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the state’s rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.

### ***Planning for Future Growth***

The following chapter is dedicated to identifying areas where future growth is likely to occur as well as locations for rural areas, where agriculture and open space are most appropriate. To ensure the community’s vision is at the forefront of future land use considerations, constraints to development, including conserved land, threatened wildlife habitat, wetlands, and slope are identified. Being considerate and thoughtful when planning where future growth may be most suitable is essential to ensuring that the character and historical value of the community are respected and acknowledged. Current and future residents, land developers, and prospective local business owners may find the following land use maps beneficial in the process of considering locations best suitable for their business or residence.

### ***Analyses***

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#### ***Alignment with Community Vision***

The Future Land Use Plan, which identifies growth areas where residential and commercial development are projected, and rural areas, where open space and agriculture are top priorities, aligns with Island Falls’ vision statement, to “grow into modern times.” By identifying constraints to development, including wetlands, threatened wildlife habitat, conserved land, and the slope of terrain, future growth is fostered while also being thoughtful towards community values and the “distinctive heritage” of Island Falls. The careful designation of these areas provides a glimpse of potential for future development while maintaining mindful consideration of and appreciation for the community’s past.

Rural, industrial, residential, and mixed commercial and residential growth is expected in designated areas of the Future Land Use Plan. The Rural area directly supports Island Falls’ history as an agricultural community centered around small family farms. On a smaller scale, farming still plays a role in the community today. Designated rural areas in the Future Land Use Plan may experience more farming activities in the coming years, all while reinforcing the agricultural uses they are intended for.

While Rural areas represent the continued support for agricultural activities, the Industrial growth area symbolizes the need for increased economic development, as the community evolves and “grows into modern times.” Past industries, such as the starch factory, drove economic development and sustained the local workforce. Designating land viable for industrial uses puts the community in a position to diversify the local economy while expanding the potential for employment opportunities. Similarly, the mixed Commercial and Residential growth area signifies mindfulness and fulfillment of the existing need for housing while also considering the community’s future economic development. This mixed development will build the local business community while also providing the municipality with the opportunity to diversify and add to the existing housing stock.

Despite statistics that project Island Falls to experience a decrease in population in the coming years, the community has observed an increase in home purchases and school enrollments during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Adding to the existing housing stock will be essential to supporting both existing and future residents, which is central to the community’s vision of moving towards the future while maintaining mindfulness towards past and present needs and conditions.

### ***Land Use Districts***

Zoning districts in Island Falls are designated for Protection, Residential, Agricultural/Forest, Commercial, Industrial, and Limited Residential purposes. While there are areas dedicated to commercial, industrial, and residential development in the eastern and western sections of town, the vast majority of land in the southern parts of town is zoned as Agricultural/Forest in which working farms and forestry activities are located. Island Falls adopts shoreland zoning to protect water bodies such as Mattawamkeag Lake, Pleasant Lake, and West Branch Mattawamkeag River as well as their surrounding areas. The many areas zoned as Agricultural/Forest and Protection districts expand natural opportunities for resource protection. Constraints to development, including areas with a high slope and significant wildlife habitat create a balance between land suitable for future development and land dedicated to resource protection. To support the proposed land uses, major municipal capital investments are directed towards growth areas, particularly in the downtown area, where upgrades and revitalization will result in increases in residential and commercial development.

In the Future Land Use Plan, growth areas are designated in the northwest portion of the town’s boundaries. Most notably, municipal investments are directed towards the downtown area, where mixed commercial and residential growth are expected. Upgrades completed in this area will promote local economic development by attracting potential residents and business owners that wish to live and work in a rural and walkable area. Mixed commercial and residential development is a natural fit in the downtown, a dedicated location for businesses and residences. Southeast of the downtown area, there is ample land on Pleasant

Street for residential development, particularly single-family homes. If demand for apartments and/or duplexes increases, the future construction of a public sewer system will enable developers to build multi-unit housing. Residential growth in this area is compatible with current zoning laws that designate the area as a Residential district. Northwest of downtown Island Falls is an area suitable for industrial growth, which, if developed upon, could diversify local employment opportunities and attract those wishing to live and work in town. Past industrial activity in this location puts the area in a position to directly support another industry. Two rural areas along Route 2 may experience an increase in working farms and agricultural activities, which are suitable uses for the Agricultural/Forest zones in which they are already located.

### ***Natural Opportunities and Constraints***

Site suitability and the identification of constraints to development both played a significant role in the process of designating areas for future residential, industrial, and commercial growth. When considering an area most suitable for commercial growth, close proximity and convenient access to Interstate 95 was a strong consideration. Similarly, the residential and commercial growth area that extends from Interstate 95 to downtown Island Falls was strategically located so future businesses and residential units would be in close proximity to public facilities, including the Municipal Building, Town Office, and community spaces.

Slope, threatened wildlife habitat, wetlands, and land under conservation represent potential constraints to development. With the longevity of future development in mind, growth areas were located away from potential constraints to development to minimize impacts to natural resources and wildlife. While the slope of terrain is highest surrounding Pleasant Lake and Mattawamkeag Lake, terrain is relatively level in designated growth areas in the Future Land Use Plan. Rural area located northeast of downtown Island Falls is in close proximity to Robinson Mountain, that has an elevation of 1,021 feet. The high slope of terrain in this area may make future farming and agricultural activities a challenge.

Of Island Falls' limited amount of conserved land located on Robinson Mountain, it is unlikely that this will be a barrier to future development. Threatened wildlife habitat for two mussel species extends from the northwest portion of the municipality to the middle portion, located north of Upper Mattawamkeag Lake. When considering development proposals, the community will follow all land use regulations and shoreland protection measures to ensure that impacts to threatened wildlife habitat are minimized. Similarly, Island Falls will prioritize the protection of the many wetlands dispersed throughout the municipality and continue to follow all shoreland zoning regulations.



## ***Recent Development Trends***

In the Future Land Use Plan, growth areas are designated based on where future commercial and residential growth is desirable. Upgrades and revitalization in the downtown area will foster commercial and residential growth in close proximity to the downtown and Interstate 95, where recent commercial development has taken place.

With capital investment projects focusing on upgrades to the downtown area, there is a projected increase in residential units and commercial development over the next decade. On an annual basis, 3-4 residential units are expected, adding an estimated 40 total units to the local housing stock. As revitalization of the downtown area progresses, the community's business population is expected to grow by 1-2 businesses per year, welcoming approximately 15 new businesses over the course of the next decade. As mentioned previously, downtown revitalization is an ongoing process that will likely result in a variety of businesses choosing to locate in the municipality.

## ***Natural Resource Protection***

While future residential and commercial development will advance local economic development, special attention must be given to natural resource protection. Non-regulatory protective measures such as the efforts made by the Island Falls Lakes Association and The Aroostook County Conservation Commission work in concert with regulatory and non-regulatory protective measures led by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, and Maine Department of Environmental Protection to conserve threatened wildlife habitat and open wetlands. Maintaining communication with these state departments, local groups, and regional entities is key to ensuring the long-term protection of these natural resources and wildlife habitats. At the local level, ensuring that local ordinances prioritize these natural resources and recognize their value will assist in the monitoring and assessment of environmental impacts from a project's proposal to completion.

Growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan are primarily diverted away from significant natural resources to support their continued protection. State listed habitat for two rare and threatened mussel species, Yellow Lampmussel (*Lampsilis cariosa*) and Brook Floater (*Alasmidonta varicosa*) is located along the West Branch and East Branch of the Mattawamkeag River, just north of the downtown area. Commercial and residential development that occurs in downtown Island Falls will follow all existing land use and environmental regulations to ensure the proper protection of the threatened mussel populations. All growth areas are situated northwest of the Greater Mattawamkeag Lake Focus Area where open wetlands, undeveloped shorelines, deer wintering area, and wading bird and waterfowl habitat are located. By maintaining low levels of disturbance and development in these areas, these natural

communities and wildlife populations will be able to thrive for years to come.

### ***Capital Investments & Proposed Land Uses***

To support mixed commercial and residential development in the downtown area, a \$500,000 upgrade of the downtown between 2022 and 2026 is essential. Upgrading building and transportation infrastructure in the downtown area will attract businesses and people that desire a central location that is walkable to community amenities and resources.

Despite a recent town vote to suspend the installation of a public sewer system, the two-phase, ten-million-dollar project, is crucial to supporting business and residential development, particularly mixed-use buildings. The current private sewer system infrastructure will not be able to accommodate the growth that is needed to meet economic development goals, including increased tourism and local spending.

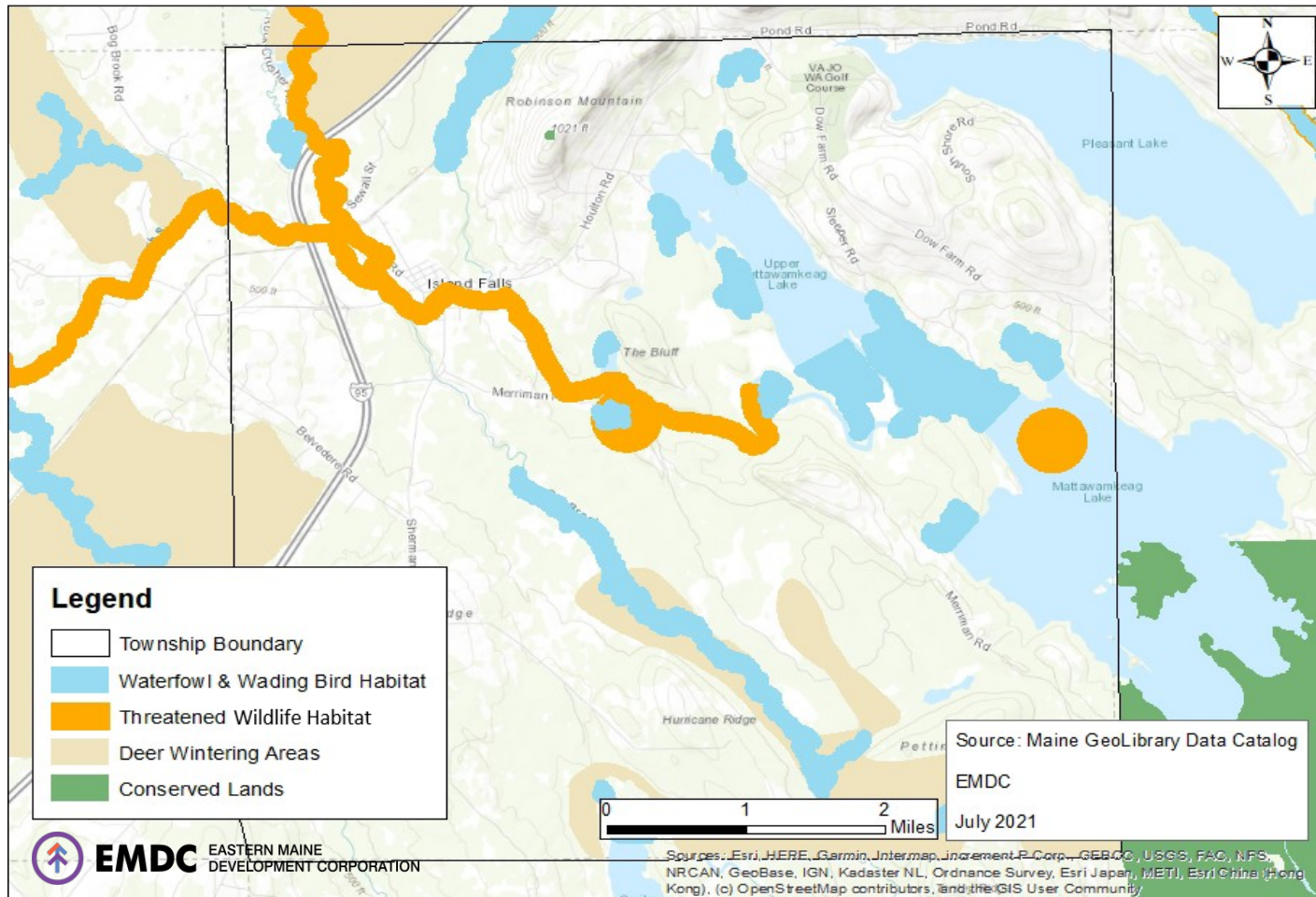
Renovations of the Island Falls Town Office and Municipal Building, located in the mixed commercial and residential growth area in the Future Land Use Plan, will support community meetings and improve the delivery of municipal services. The remaining two phases of the three-phase project, projected to cost \$450,000 and conclude construction in 2023, will give the space a community center “feel.” Among the improvements that are being made, during the third phase of construction, the entire right wing of the Municipal Building will be converted into a big meeting room, extending the small meeting and kitchen area and, in the process, eliminating the current garage bay area.

## Island Falls Base Map



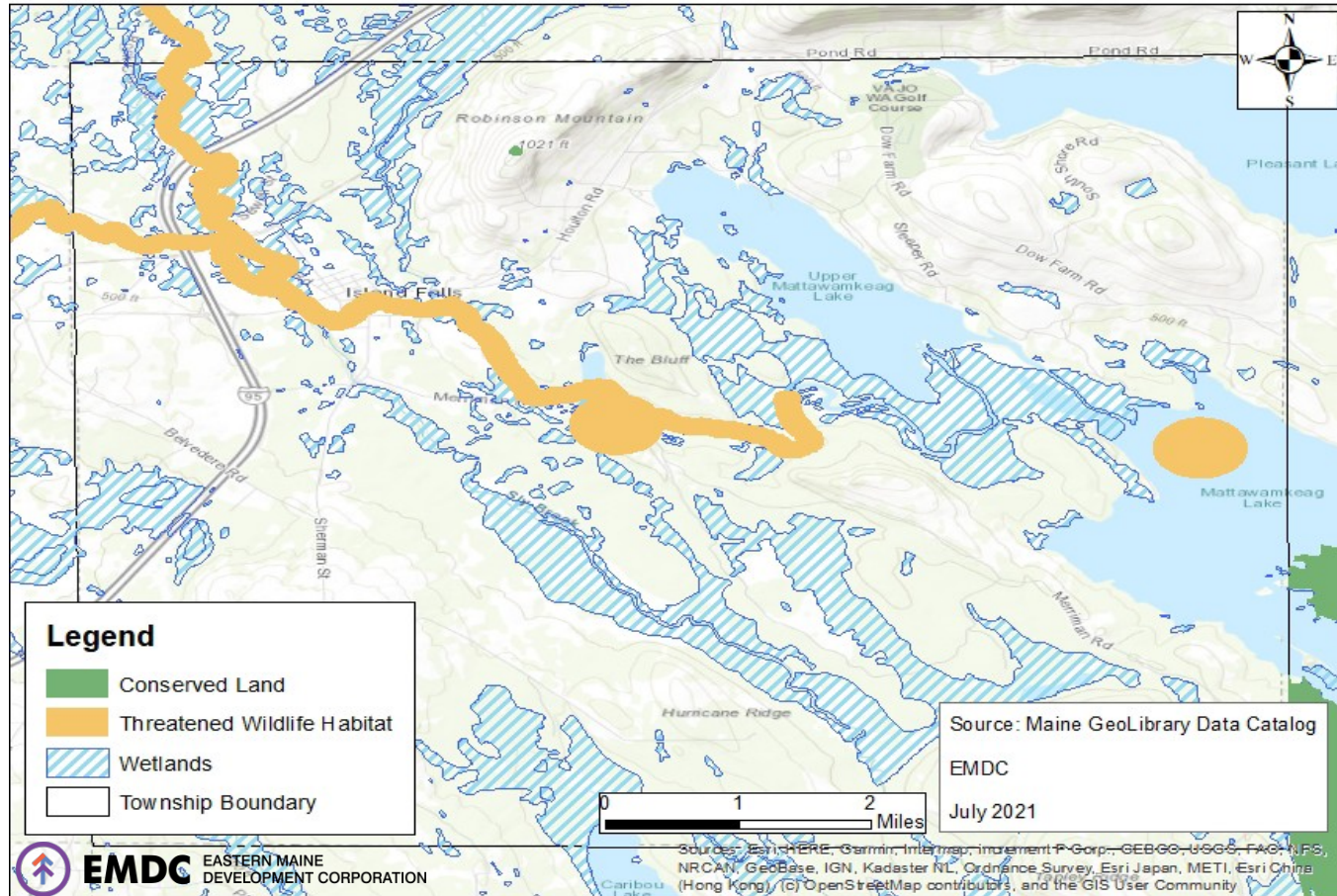
The Base Map above provides a general snapshot of Island Falls complete with the identification of railroads, public roads, and the local library.

## Island Falls Natural Resources



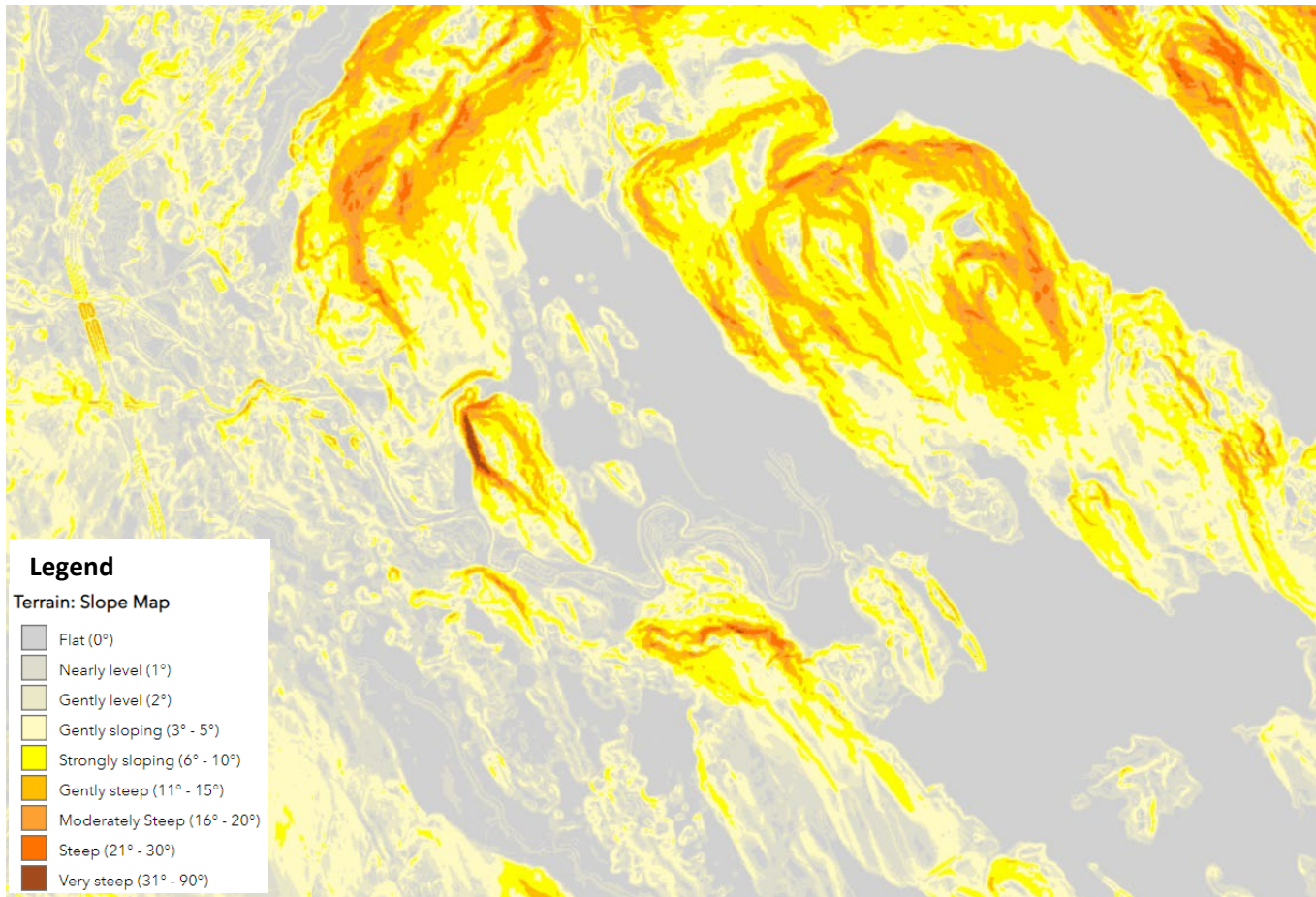
In the map above, significant natural resources are identified. While Threatened Wildlife Habitat is located in the center and northwest parts of the municipality, Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat is more widespread, although concentrated in the area near Upper Mattawamkeag Lake.

## Island Falls Constraints to Development



Wetlands, Threatened Wildlife Habitat, and Conserved Land all represent potential constraints to future development. When a developer is in the process of locating a suitable area for commercial, industrial, and/or residential infrastructure, the potential impacts on the natural resource above should be taken into careful consideration.

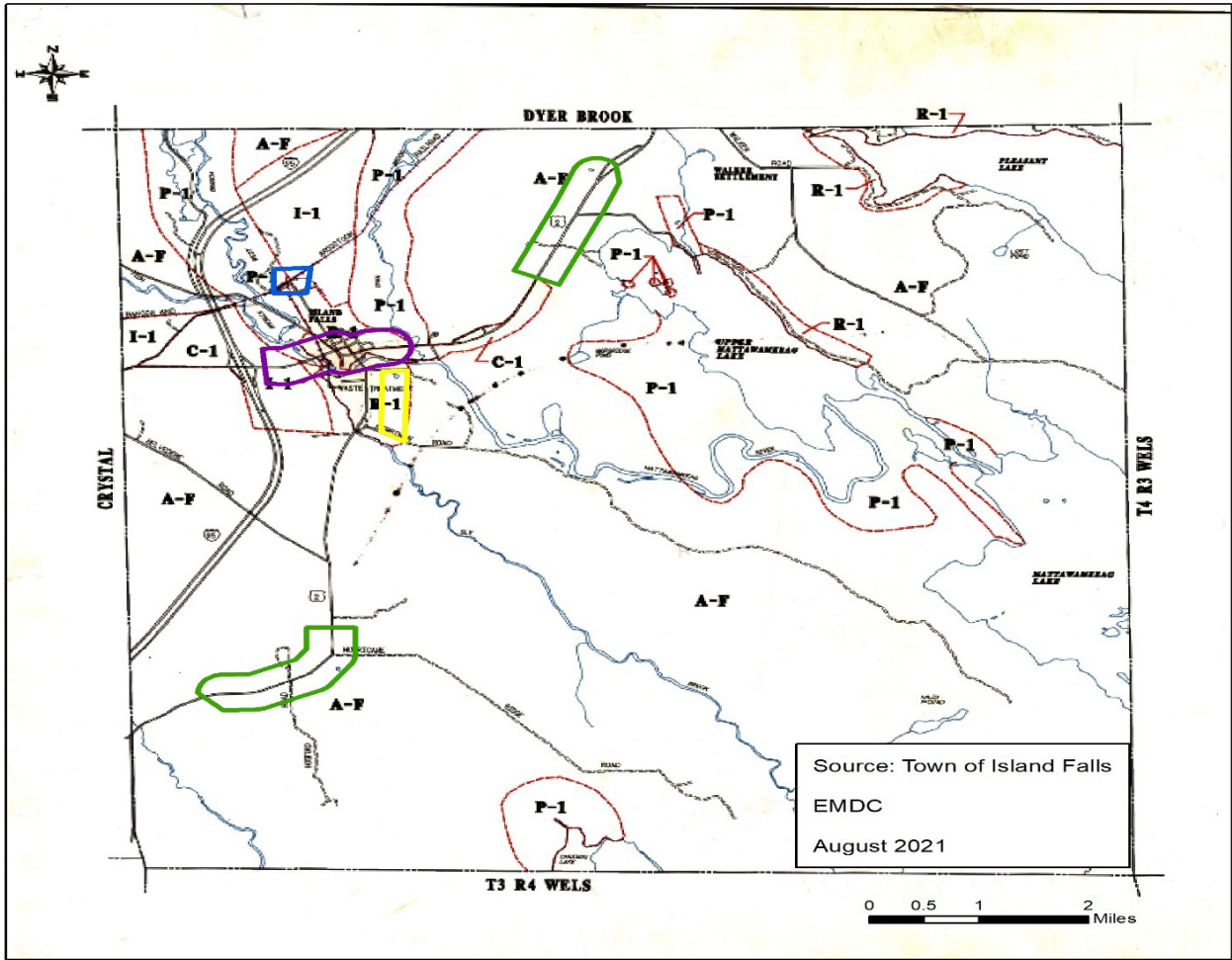
## Island Falls Terrain: Slope



Source: Airbus, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatastyrelsen, GSA, GSI and the GIS User Community.

Another natural constraint to development is the slope of terrain. When developers are in the process of determining the suitability of land, slope must be taken into consideration to ensure the proposed location is feasible for the project(s).

# Island Falls Future Land Use Plan



Areas where future industrial (blue), residential (yellow), and mixed commercial and residential growth (purple) are expected is depicted in the map above. Rural areas are also identified in green, where working farms and land used for agricultural purposes may experience growth. Areas that are not highlighted are expected to continue observing existing zoning regulations.

## ***Policies***

- 1). To coordinate the community's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts.
- 2). To support the locations, types, scales, and intensities of land uses the community desires as stated in its vision.
- 3). To support the level of financial commitment necessary to provide needed infrastructure in growth areas.
- 4). To establish efficient permitting procedures, especially in growth areas.
- 5). To protect critical rural and critical waterfront areas from the impacts of development.

## ***Strategies***

- 1). Assign responsibility for implementing the Future Land Use Plan to the appropriate committee, board or municipal official.
- 2). Using the descriptions provided in the Future Land Use Plan narrative, maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to:
  - a. Clearly define the desired scale, intensity, and location of future development;
  - b. Establish or maintain fair and efficient permitting procedures, and explore streamlining permitting procedures in growth areas; and
  - c. Clearly define protective measures for critical natural resources and, where applicable, important natural resources.
  - d. Clearly define protective measures for any proposed critical rural areas and/or critical waterfront areas, if proposed.
- 3). Include in the Capital Investment Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to support proposed land uses.
- 4). Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.
- 5). Provide the code enforcement officer with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A. §4451.
- 6). Track new development in the community by type and location.
- 7). Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas identified in the Future Land Use Plan.
- 8). Periodically (at least every five years) evaluate implementation of the plan in



accordance with Section 2.7.

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**BELIEVE YOU CAN  
AND YOU'RE HALFWAY THERE.**

**THEODORE ROOSEVELT**

# ***APPENDIX***

## ***Strategy Implementation Table***

The table below lists strategies in applicable chapters of the plan and local groups and entities that will play lead roles in their implementation. Estimated timeframes for strategy completion are also provided.

<b>Chapter Title</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Responsible Agent(s)</b>	<b>Timeframe for Completion</b>
<b>Housing</b>	1. Enact growth area land use regulations to increase density, decrease lot size, setbacks and road widths, or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing.	Select Board, Planning Board	1-3 years
	2. Amend the land use ordinance to allow the addition of at least one accessory apartment per dwelling unit in growth areas, subject to site suitability.	Select Board, Planning Board	1-3 years
	3. Create a community affordable/workforce housing committee and/or regional affordable housing coalition.	Select Board, Planning Board	1-3 years
	4. Designate a location(s) in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3)(M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2).	Select Board, Planning Board	1-3 years
	5. Support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.	Select Board, Planning Board	Immediate/Ongoing
	6. Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable.	Select Board, Planning Board	5-10 years
<b>Transportation</b>	1. Continue to update a prioritized improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network.	Select Board, Planning Board, Roads Committee	5-10 years
	2. Actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts.	Select Board, Planning Board, Roads Committee	Immediate/Ongoing

	<p>3. Amend the land use ordinance as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:</p> <p>a. Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73);</p> <p>b. State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704; and</p> <p>c. State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A §704-A.</p>	Select Board, Planning Board, Roads Committee	1-3 years
	<p>4. Amend land use ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.</p>	Select Board, Planning Board, Roads Committee	1-3 years
<b>Economy</b>	<p>1. If appropriate, assign responsibility and provide financial support for economic development activities to the proper Entity.</p>	Select Board, Economic Development Advisory Committee	Immediate/Ongoing
	<p>2. Amend the land use ordinance to reflect the desired scale, design, intensity, and location of future economic development.</p>	Select Board, Economic Development Advisory Committee	1-3 years
	<p>3. If public investments are foreseen to support economic development, identify the mechanisms to be considered to finance them (local tax dollars, creating a tax increment financing district, a Community Development Block Grant or other grants, bonding, impact fees, etc.)</p>	Select Board, Economic Development Advisory Committee	Immediate/Ongoing
	<p>4. Participate in any regional economic development planning efforts.</p>	Select Board, Economic Development Advisory Committee	Immediate/Ongoing
<b>Water Resources</b>	<p>1. Amend the land use ordinance as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with:</p> <p>a. Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 M.R.S.A. §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502).</p>	Planning Board, Island Falls Lakes Association, Maine Department of Environmental Protection	1-3 years

	<p>b. Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.</p> <p>c. Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program</p>		
	2. Consider amending the land use ordinance, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development standards.	Planning Board	1-3 years
	3. Enact public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms, as necessary.	Planning Board	Ongoing
	4. Encourage landowners to protect water quality. Provide local contact information at the municipal office for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine.	Island Falls Lakes Association	Immediate/Ongoing
	5. Adopt water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public and private roads and public properties and require their implementation by contractors, owners, and community officials and employees.	Planning Board	Immediate/Ongoing
	6. Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.	Island Falls Lakes Association	Immediate/Ongoing
	7. Develop a public sewer system to connect residents with cesspools and failing septic systems to further reduce point source contamination.	Select Board	5-10 years
<b>Natural Resources</b>	1. Ensure that the land use ordinance is consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources.	Planning Board	Immediate/Ongoing
	2. Designate critical natural resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan.	Planning Board	Immediate/Ongoing

	3. Through the land use ordinance, require subdivision or non-residential property developers to look for and identify critical natural resources that may be on site and to appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent or extraction.	Planning Board	Immediate/Ongoing
	4. Through the land use ordinance, require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to include as part of the review process, consideration of pertinent BwH maps and information regarding critical natural resources. The BwH maps are to be used for planning purposes only. For permitting and specific development review purposes, the project applicant and/or town staff should contact MDIFW and MNAP.	Planning Board	1-3 years
	5. Participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.	Island Falls Lakes Association	Immediate/Ongoing
	6. Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.	Select Board, Planning Board	Immediate/Ongoing
	7. Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations.	Planning Board, Select Board	1-3 years
<b>Agricultural and Forest Resources</b>	1. Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices as required by 12 M.R.S.A. §8869.	Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer	Immediate/Ongoing
	2. Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations and pertaining to agricultural management practices.	Planning Board, Code Enforcement Officer	Immediate/Ongoing
	3. Amend the land use ordinance to require commercial or subdivision developments in critical rural areas, if applicable, maintain areas with prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.	Planning Board	1-3 years

4. Limit non-residential development in critical rural areas (if the town designates critical rural areas) to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor	N/A	N/A
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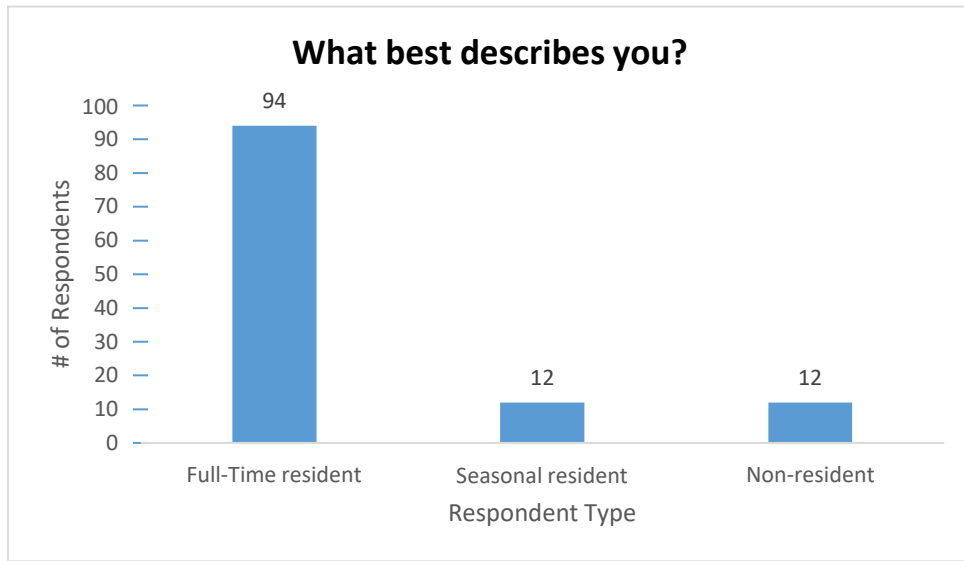
	recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.		
	5. Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs.	Tax Assessor	Immediate/Ongoing
	6. Permit land use activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, firewood operations, sawmills, log buying yards, and pick-your-own operations.	Planning Board	Immediate/Ongoing
	7. Include agriculture, commercial forestry operations, and land conservation that supports them in local or regional economic development plans.	Economic Development Advisory Committee	1-3 years
<b>Historic and Archaeological Resources</b>	1. For known historic archaeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, through local land use ordinances require subdivision or non-residential developers to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.	Planning Board	1-3 years
	2. Amend the land use ordinance to require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.	Planning Board	1-3 years
	3. Work with the local or county historic society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary plan for, a comprehensive community survey of the community's historic and archaeological resources.	Island Falls Historical Society	1-3 years



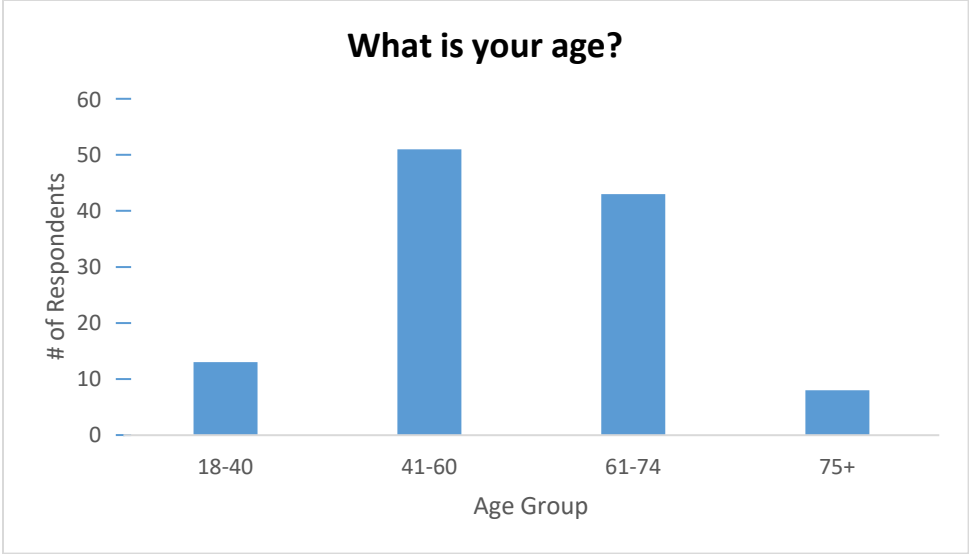
<b>Recreation</b>	1. Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. Assign a committee or community official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan.	Select Board, Recreation Department	5-10 years
	2. Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.	Recreation Department, Big Valley Sno Club, Island Falls Free Wheelers ATV Club	1-5 years
	3. Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.	Recreation Department, Nature Conservancy	Immediate/Ongoing
	4. Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine’s landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. § 159-A.	Planning Board	1-3 years
<b>Public Facilities and Services</b>	1. Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate the community’s anticipated growth and changing demographics.	Planning Board, Select Board	Ongoing
	2. Locate new public facilities comprising at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas.	Planning Board	5-10 years
	3. Encourage local sewer and water districts to coordinate planned service extension with the Future Land Use Plan.	Planning Board, Select Board	Immediate/Ongoing
	4. If public water supply expansion is anticipated, identify and protect suitable sources.	N/A	N/A
	5. Explore options for regional delivery of local services.	Planning Board, Select Board	Ongoing
<b>Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan</b>	1. Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan or and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.	Planning Board, Select Board	Ongoing

## Island Falls Community Survey Results

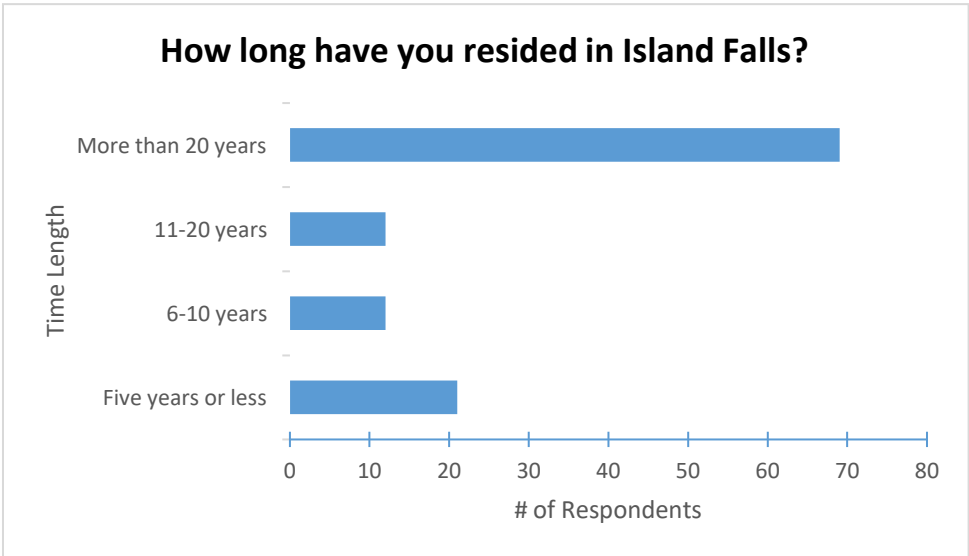
In December 2020, one hundred and twenty (120) individuals in Island Falls, Maine participated in a survey to assess public perceptions of quality of life as well as community opportunities and challenges. To enhance the accessibility of the survey, surveys were available to complete online and on paper in the Town Office. Upon the survey deadline, eighty-four online surveys and thirty-six paper surveys were completed.



<b>Respondent type</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Full-Time resident	94	80%
Seasonal resident	12	10%
Non-resident	12	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100%</b>

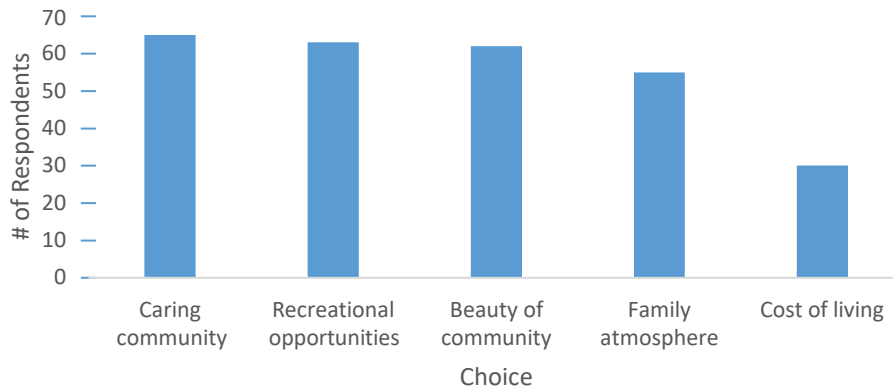


Age Group	# of Respondents	% of Total
18-40	13	11.3%
41-60	51	44.3%
61-74	43	37.4%
75+	8	7.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100%</b>



Time Length	# of Respondents	% of Total
Five years or less	21	18.0%
6-10 years	12	10.5%
11-20 years	12	10.5%
More than 20 years	69	61.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100%</b>

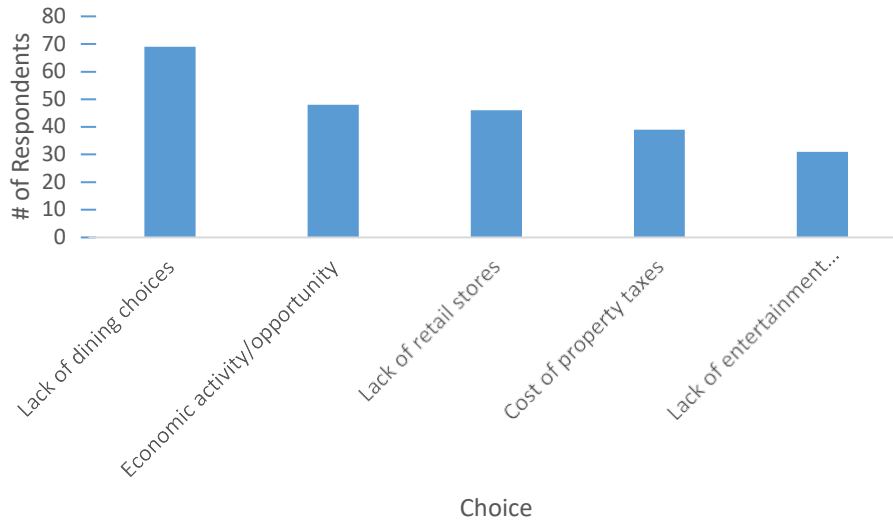
### What do you like most about living in Island Falls?



Note: These are the top 5 most cited answers.

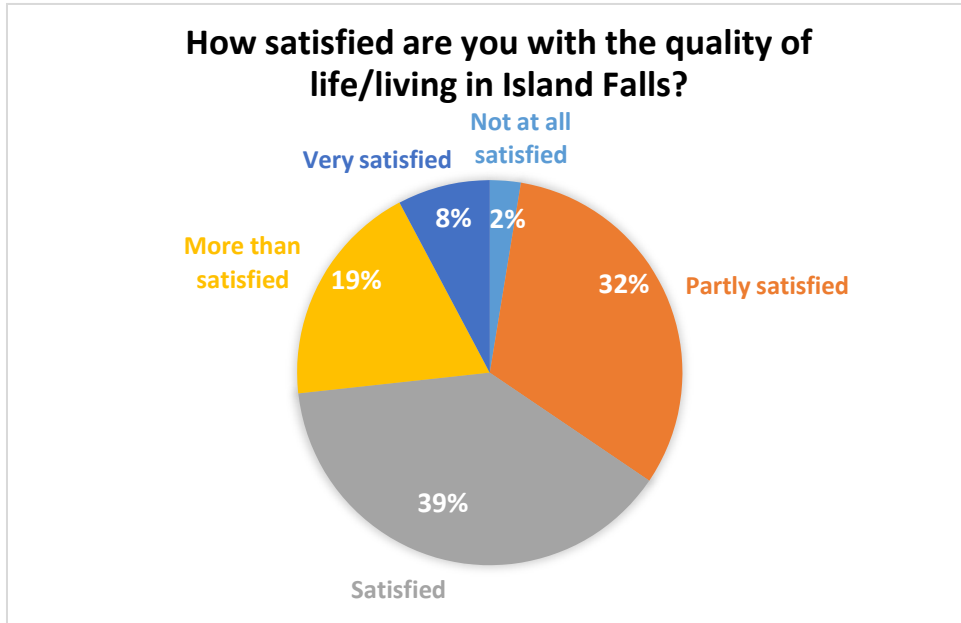
Choice	# of Respondents
Caring community	65
Recreational opportunities	63
Beauty of community	62
Family atmosphere	55
Cost of living	30

### What do you like least about living in Island Falls?



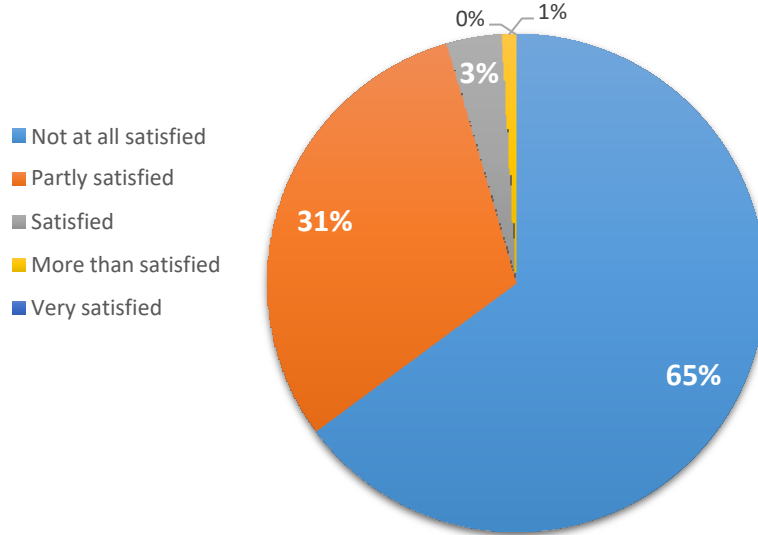
Note: These are the top 5 most cited answers.

Choice	# of Respondents
Lack of dining choices	69
Economic activity/opportunity	48
Lack of retail stores	46
Cost of property taxes	39
Lack of entertainment activities	31



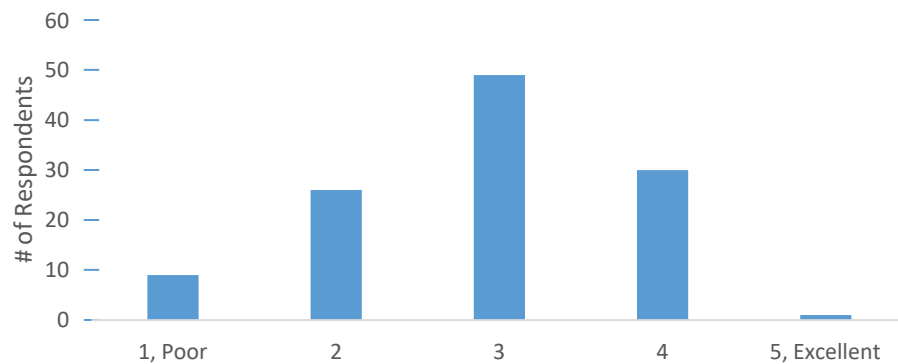
Satisfaction Level	# of Respondents
Not at all satisfied	3
Partly satisfied	37
Satisfied	45
More than satisfied	22
Very satisfied	9
Total	116

### How satisfied are you with Island Falls' economic growth in the past 5-10 years?

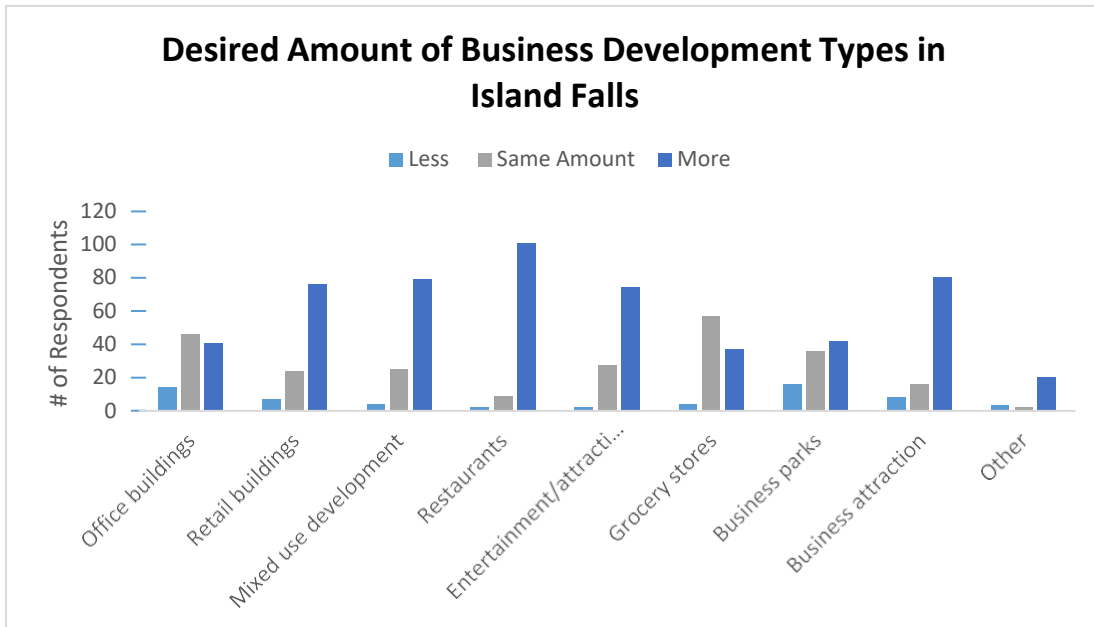


Satisfaction Level	# of Respondents
Not at all satisfied	72
Partly satisfied	34
Satisfied	4
More than satisfied	1
Very satisfied	0
Total	111

### Overall Condition of Island Falls' Roads and Shoulders, Bridges, Sidewalks, Bicycle Facilities and Signage, Ranked

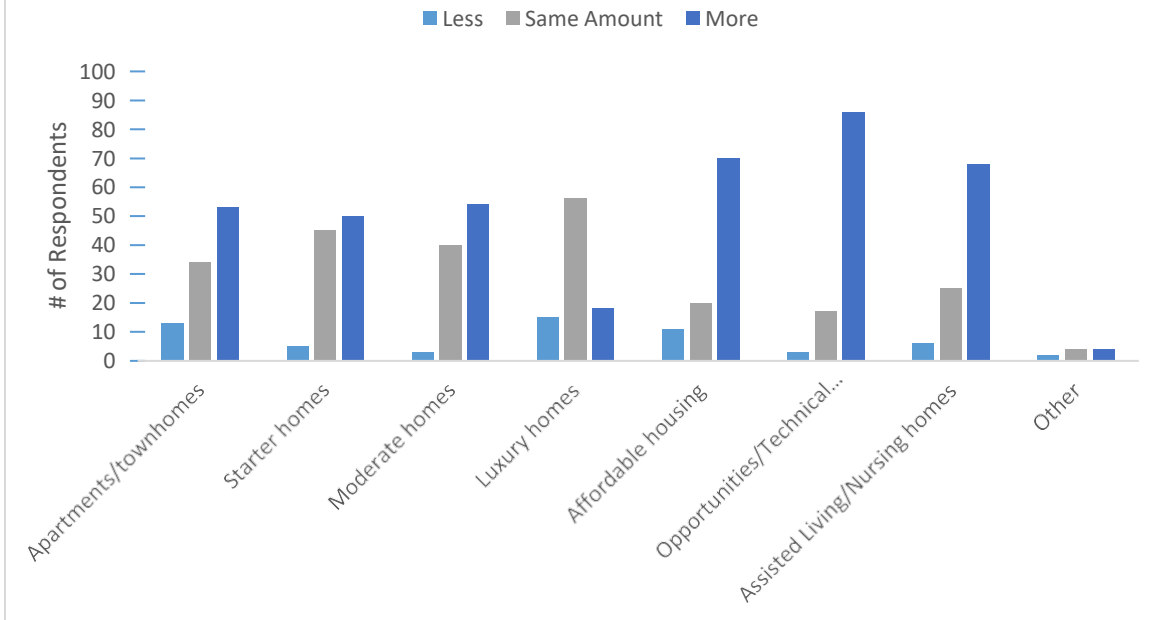


Rank	# of Respondents
1, Poor	9
2	26
3	49
4	30
5, Excellent	1
Total	115



Desired Amount of Business Development Types in Island Falls			
Type	Less	Same Amount	More
Office buildings	14	46	41
Retail buildings	7	24	76
Mixed use development	4	25	79
Restaurants	2	9	101
Entertainment/attractions	2	27	74
Grocery stores	4	57	37
Business parks	16	36	42
Business attraction	8	16	80
Other	3	2	20

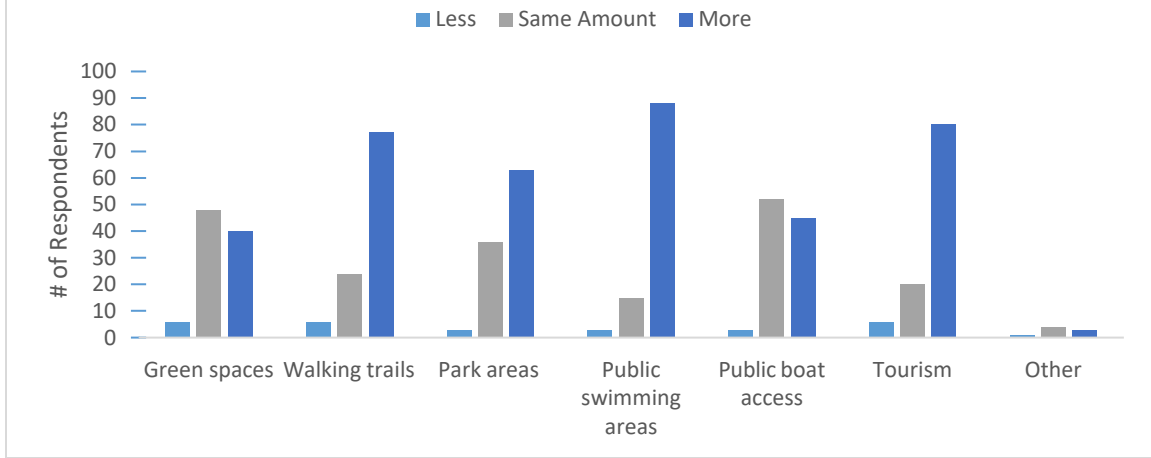
## Desired Amount of Residential Development Types in Island Falls



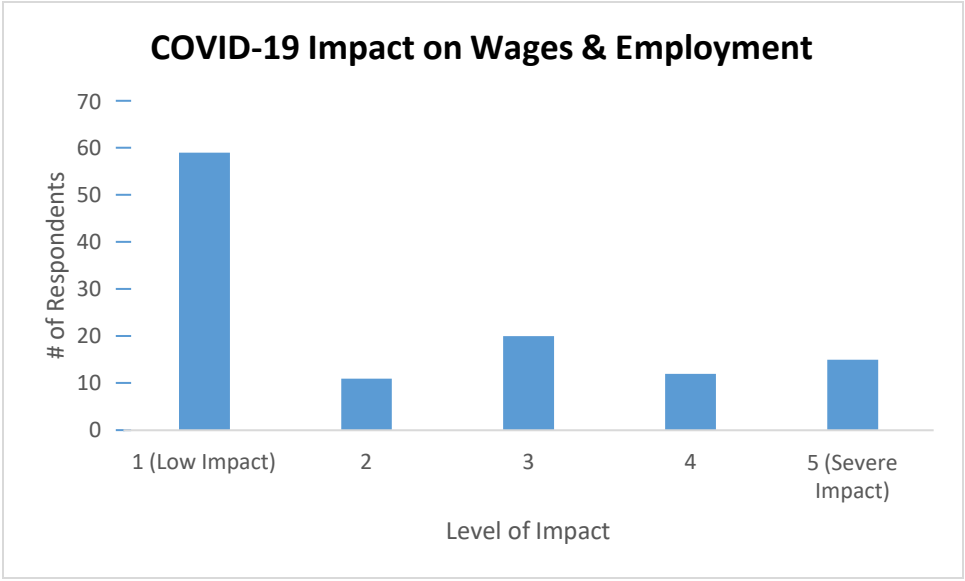
Desired Amount of Residential Development Types in Island Falls			
Type	Less	Same Amount	More
Apartments/townhomes	13	34	53
Starter homes	5	45	50
Moderate homes	3	40	54
Luxury homes	15	56	18
Affordable housing	11	20	70
Opportunities/Technical assistance for small business entrepreneurs	3	17	86
Assisted Living/Nursing homes	6	25	68
Other	2	4	4



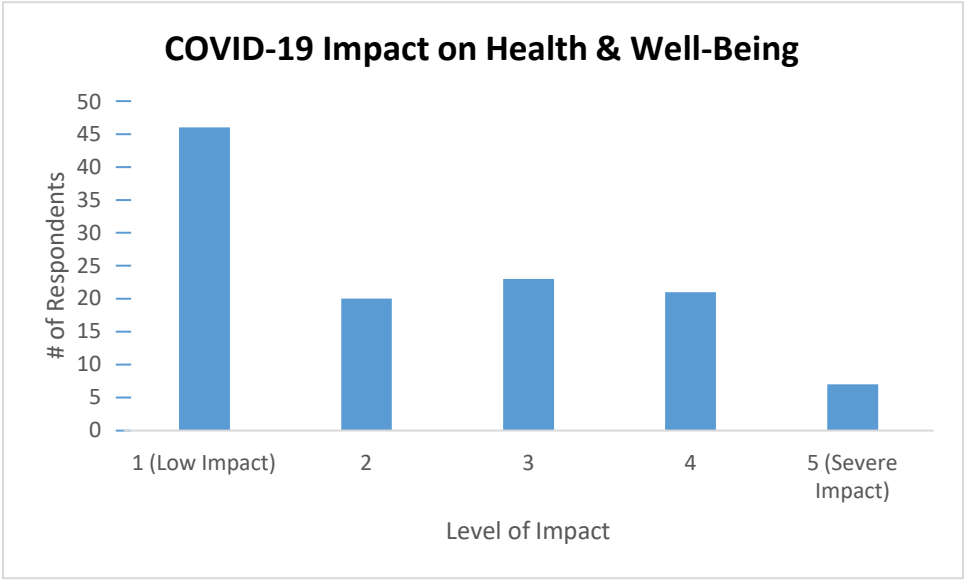
## Desired Amount of Recreational Development Types in Island Falls



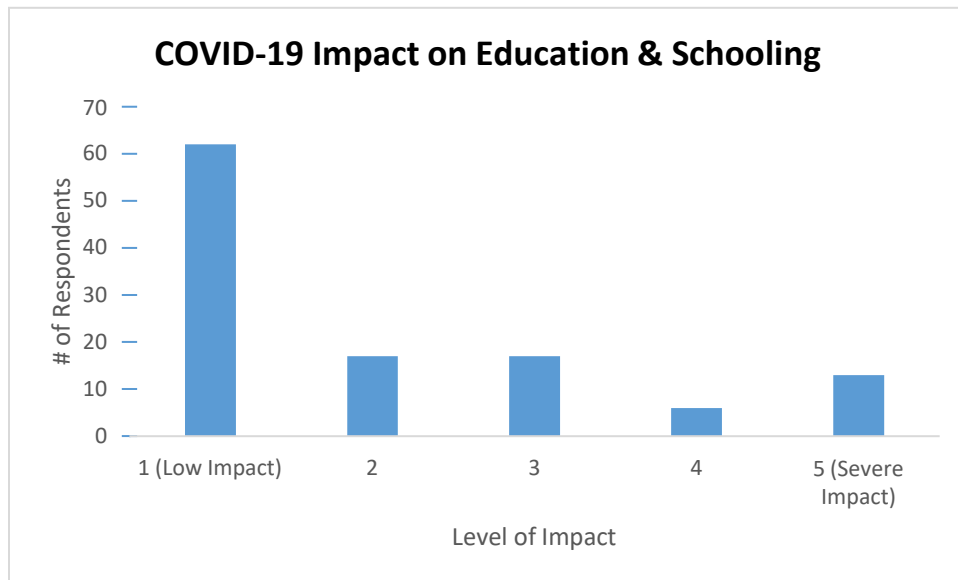
<b>Desired Amount of Recreational Development Types in Island Falls</b>			
<b>Type</b>	<b>Less</b>	<b>Same Amount</b>	<b>More</b>
Green spaces	6	48	40
Walking trails	6	24	77
Park areas	3	36	63
Public swimming areas	3	15	88
Public boat access	3	52	45
Tourism	6	20	80
Other	1	4	3



COVID-19 Impact on Wages and Employment	
Rank	# of Respondents
1 (Low Impact)	59
2	11
3	20
4	12
5 (Severe Impact)	15
Total	117

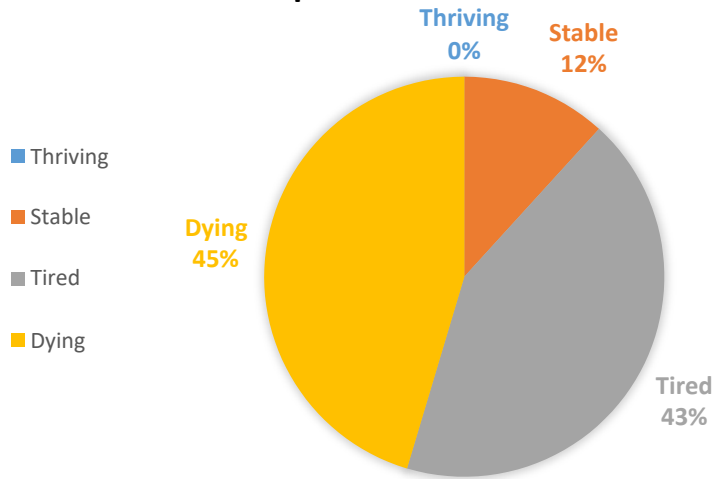


<b>COVID-19 Impact on Health and Well-Being</b>	
<b>Rank</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>
1 (Low Impact)	46
2	20
3	23
4	21
5 (Severe Impact)	7
Total	117



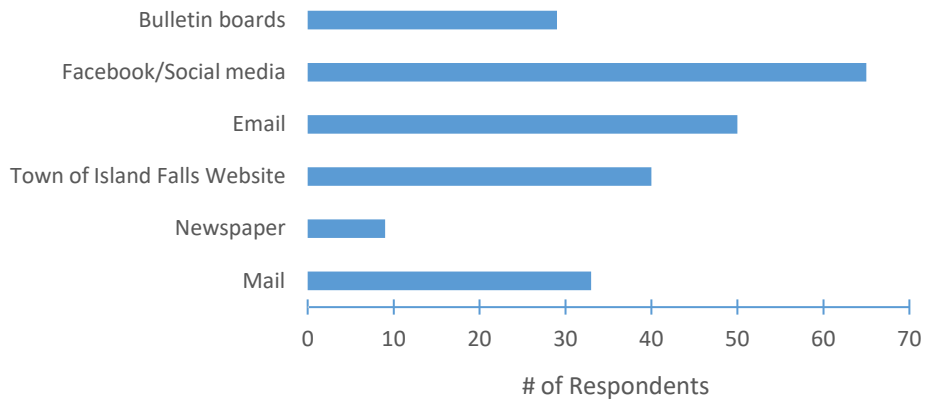
<b>COVID-19 Impact on Education and Schooling</b>	
<b>Rank</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>
1 (Low Impact)	62
2	17
3	17
4	6
5 (Severe Impact)	13
Total	115

### Overall Impression of Island Falls



Overall Impression of Island Falls	
Description	# of Respondents
Thriving	0
Stable	14
Tired	51
Dying	54
Total	119

### Preferred Methods of Public Meeting/Community News Notification



Public Meeting/Community News Notification Preferred Methods	
Method	# of Respondents
Mail	33
Newspaper	9
Town of Island Falls Website	40
Email	50
Facebook/Social Media	65
Bulletin Boards	29

### New Public Sewer System – Thoughts and Concerns

Below is a word cloud of survey respondents’ thoughts and concerns related to a new public sewer system in Island Falls. The size of each word below indicates its frequency in the survey responses. The larger the word, the more frequent it was cited in the survey.

