

INTRODUCTION

Rangeley Region First

The Maine Land Use Regulation Commission's *Comprehensive Land Use Plan (1997 Revision)* calls for establishing zoning districts that prospectively guide development in regions where heavy development pressure may compromise high resource values. The plan recognizes that *formulating a coherent future vision for these areas is best done as part of a regional planning process that identifies areas most appropriate for development and conservation.*¹ The Rangeley area is the number one priority established for attention in the plan, followed by the Moosehead Lake, Carrabasset Valley, and Millinocket areas.

Prospective Zones Are Different

Prospective Zoning is different from the Commission's usual approach. It establishes districts large enough to accommodate all anticipated growth in a region within a certain time period rather than designating districts on a case-by-case basis to make room for particular development projects.

With some exceptions², the current process works like this -- when a landowner wants a permit for anything more intensive than a single-family home or home occupation within a Management or Protection Subdistrict, he or she must first file a petition to rezone the property to a Development Subdistrict. Under this project-by-project approach, development zones are dispersed somewhat randomly. While new zones must be located within a mile of a similar zone, what the Commission calls "adjacency," development can leapfrog and spread ever outward. In contrast, prospective zoning provides explicit and reasonable boundaries to meet the development needs of a region within the next 20 years.

¹ Page 134.

² Exceptions include Lake Concept Plans, Resource Plans, and zoning for Greenfield and Madrid.

ANOTHER BIG DIFFERENCE:

Prospective zoning enables local and seasonal residents, landowners, and citizens of Maine, in general, to have a say in establishing development patterns based upon:

- ◆ a long term **VISION** for the kind of place they want the region to be generations from now;
- ◆ a **REGIONAL PLAN** that conceptually guides development within the framework of that vision, including the desired rate, kind, and location of development; and
- ◆ **ZONING DISTRICTS** that provide enough room for reasonable development within the next twenty years; and **PERFORMANCE STANDARDS** that reinforce the desired character of the region and its special values.

Benefits

Prospective planning and zoning has sound benefits; it:

- ◆ **INVOLVES PEOPLE** - landowners, local officials, the public, and organizations - in shaping a region's future;
- ◆ **GUIDES DEVELOPMENT** to the most appropriate and publicly supported locations, thus:
 - reinforcing a widely-held regional vision;
 - preventing resource degradation,
 - facilitating economic development and
 - limiting sprawl and public service costs; and

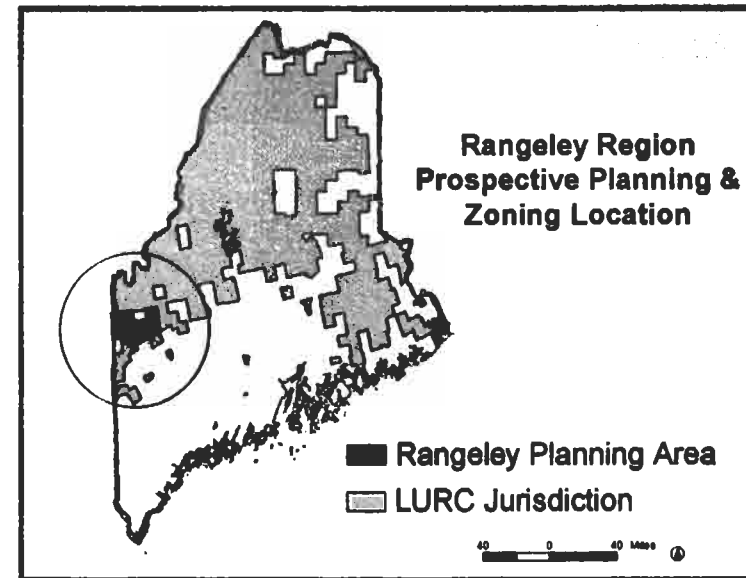
- ◆ **MAKES PERMITTING EASIER AND MORE PREDICTABLE** for landowners whose projects are consistent with the Regional Plan. They don't have to file a time-consuming and possibly costly rezoning petition.

Rangeley Region Study Area

The study area includes ten townships under the greatest development pressure in LURC jurisdiction. There are many more townships in the Rangeley area but the number was limited to keep this first prospective planning project manageable. The study area surrounds the Town of Rangeley to the east, west, and south as shown on Map 1. Five townships, including Dallas, Sandy River, Rangeley, Lincoln, and Magalloway, are plantations with elected assessors. The remaining townships rely upon state and county governments for property taxation and other public services. The townships north of Rangeley are less accessible and developed than those in the study area. Since the region is on the "fringe" of the Commission's jurisdiction, all but a few townships to the south are organized.

Public Involvement

Commission staff has held over 30 meetings with landowners, assessors, organizations, and others in the study area since the project began. Several hundred people have participated, especially at meetings in each of the plantations conducted in 1999 (see Appendix A). The staff has consulted closely with major landowners about their future development plans; met with local, regional and, statewide organizations; and mailed a project update to interested parties. Staff has also taken into account existing opinion surveys (see Appendix B).



Public Opinion Surveys Consulted

1986	Town of Rangeley Comp. Plan Survey	taxpayers	33% response
1990-91	Rangeley Lakes Chamber of Commerce	visitors	1,034
1998	Union Water Power Co. FERC Relicensing	visitors/ camp owners	471
1998	ME Audubon <i>Conservation Works Proj.</i>	year-round residents	242
		seasonal residents	64
		tourists	318

Maine Land Use Regulation Commission
Prospective Zoning Plan for the Rangeley Region

