

**HC
PC**



HCPC NEWSLETTER

Hancock County Planning Commission

395 State Street

Ellsworth, ME 04605

phone 207-667-7131; fax 207-667-2099

E-mail: hpcp@hpcpcme.org Internet: www.hpcpcme.org

Volume XXXII, Issue 2

Summer 2011

HCPC Executive Board

Fiscal Year 2011-2012

Chairman: Roderic Franzius, Hancock

Vice-Chair: Dave Milan, Bucksport

Treasurer: Raymond Jones, Gouldsboro

Secretary: Beverly Sanborn, Cranberry Isles

Directors:

Peter Colman, Blue Hill

Denis Blodgett, Brooksville

C.W. Comer, Sorrento

Charlie Wiggins, Sedgwick

Janet Michaud, County Comm. Representative

Steve Walton, County Comm. Representative

HCPC Staff

Thomas E. Martin, Executive Director

tmartin@hpcpcme.org

James H. Fisher, Senior Planner

jfisher@hpcpcme.org

Sheri Walsh, Administrative Assistant

& Planning Technician

swalsh@hpcpcme.org

In this issue. . . .

Table of Contents	Page
ANNOUNCEMENTS	1
CENSUS NEWS	2
PLANNING BOARD NEWS	3
BROWNFIELDS NEWS	4
CDBG NEWS	4
SOLID WASTE NEWS	5
TRANSPORTATION NEWS	6
GIS NEWS	9

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HCPC IS MOVING OUR NEWSLETTER ONLINE

HCPC is joining the movement to electronic publication of our quarterly newsletter. Going digital has many advantages. We will not only be saving money and trees, but delivering a better product too. Future online newsletters will have more graphics, color photographs, interactive maps, links to resources, and in-depth information on topics that matter to our towns.

We will continue to send one printed newsletter to each town office for use by those who do not have e-mail and internet access. A limited number of additional printed copies will be available on request.

We will send quarterly notices to our full distribution e-mail list letting you know that a newsletter is online. We'll also include some article titles and summaries to let you know what you will find in the newsletter. We will not clog your inbox with large attachments.

Please let us know the email address where you would like to be notified by contacting Sheri Walsh (swalsh@hpcpcme.org). You can also contact us to let us know that you prefer not to receive these quarterly notices. We will continue to post all issues on-line at: www.hpcpcme.org/news.html

Feel free to contact Tom Martin at 667-7131 if you have any questions on this new policy.

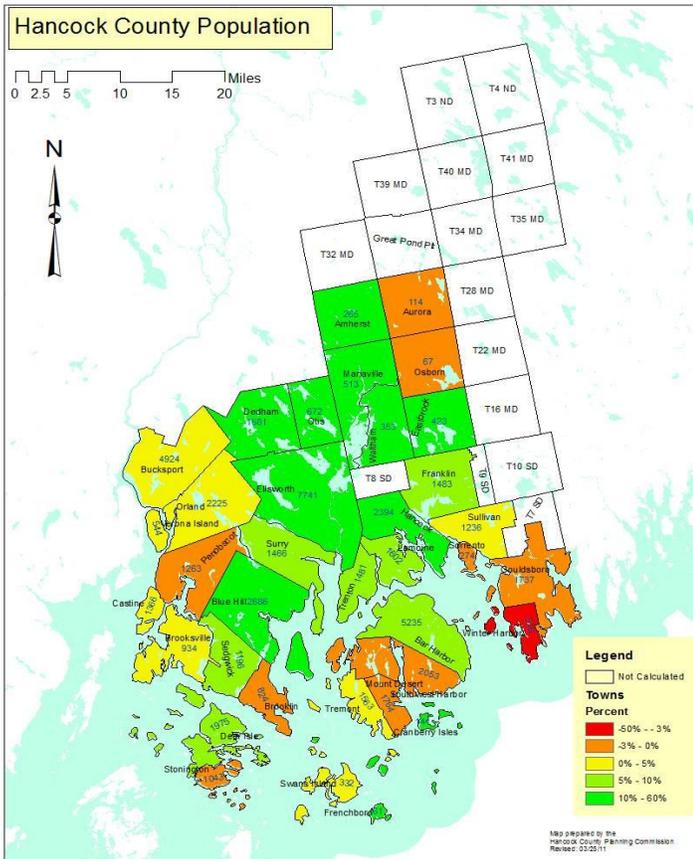
ATTENTION ALL TOWN OFFICES:

WE NEED YOUR CURRENT LIST OF MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

Be sure to fill out and return the municipal officials list we send you each July. It is important that we have up to date contact information if we are to send mailings and other information. We need e-mail addresses for sending the newsletter link. *We do not share e-mail addresses with any other individual or organization.* Please contact Sheri Walsh at the HCPC if you have any questions.

CENSUS NEWS

By Tom Martin



2010 CENSUS: A FEW FACTS AND TRENDS FOR HANCOCK COUNTY

The 2010 Census had fewer questions than were asked in previous decades. Therefore, detailed data on household income, housing conditions and employment are not available from the Census. Some of these data are being collected on an ongoing basis from the American Community Survey. See website link below for details <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?lang=en>

Here Are a Few Trends:

- Hancock County is growing at a slower pace than in recent decades. The total year-round population increased 5% from 51,791 in 2000 to 54,418 in 2010. Between 1990 and 2000, the population increased at a 10.3 percent rate.

- Some towns are losing year-round population. These include the coastal towns of Brooklin, Gouldsboro, Mount Desert, Penobscot, Sorrento, Southwest Harbor, Stonington and Winter Harbor.

- The population decline is not limited to the coastal towns. The unorganized territories lost population as did Aurora and Osborn. Some of the inland towns grew at a much slower rate than they did in recent decades. For example, Mariaville and Otis both experienced a 53 percent rate between 1990 and 2000, saw only a 24 percent growth rate between 2000 and 2010.

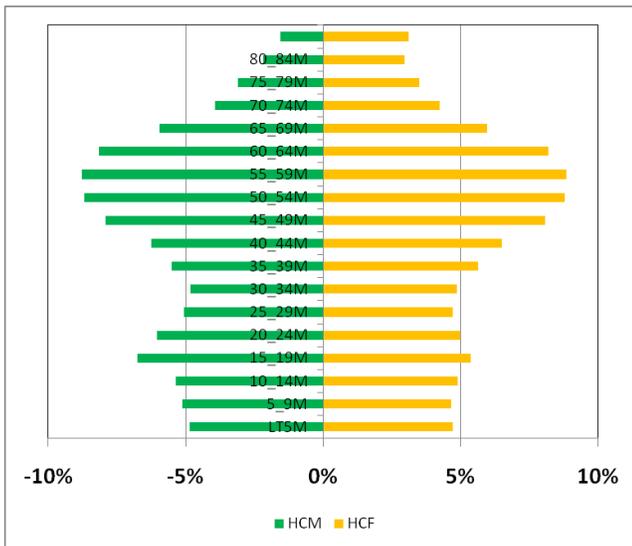
- Ellsworth had the highest numeric increase (from 6,456 residents in 2000 to 7,741 in 2010) and had the highest growth rate of any city in Maine.

- The number of housing units increased at a much faster rate (26 percent) than the year-round population. Occupied units increased at a nearly 10 percent rate while there was a 32 percent increase in the number of vacant units, which are comprised largely of second homes.

- The population continues to get older. The median age in 2010 for the county was 46.3 compared to 40.7 in 2000.

What Do These Changes Mean?

The county needs to prepare for an aging year-round population while continuing to experience a seasonal influx of second home owners and other summer visitors. If we are to retain and attract younger families we need to address the issue of affordable housing and job creation. While county-wide school enrollments have stabilized after fifteen years of decline, some schools continue the downward trend. Further school closings and consolidations are likely.



PLANNING BOARD NEWS

By Tom Martin

Tremont Comprehensive Plan Adopted at Town Meeting Unanimously

After nearly three and one-half years of hard work by volunteers in partnership with HCPC staff, the voters of Tremont unanimously adopted the comprehensive plan on May 10, 2011. The plan was deemed consistent with the State Planning Office review criteria. The town is thus eligible for preference in certain competitive state grants and

state agencies are directed to provide technical assistance to help implement the plan. The plan sets a clear direction for future town growth and development.

Is Your Town Ready to Update Its Comprehensive Plan?

If you are planning to update your comprehensive plan, please note that some changes are currently proposed for the plan review criteria (known as Chapter 208). These are expected to be approved later this summer and will simplify the comprehensive plan review process. For the latest information, contact Tom Martin. The major changes include:

1. Changes to the linkage between Chapter 208 and the Sensible Transportation Policy Act.

The current Rule’s transportation section asks communities to incorporate all the minimum requirements of MaineDOT’s Sensible Transportation Policy Act’s rule (approximately 3-4 times more than other topic areas within chapter 208). The proposed Rule amendments establish revised transportation section with minimum standards more in keeping with those required for other topic areas.

2. Critical Natural Resources

Currently, the term “Critical Natural Resources” applies not only to our most sensitive and highly-regulated natural resources, but also to some that are not regulated. To make a clear distinction between the two, non-regulated or minimally-regulated resources have been removed from the “Critical Natural Resources” definition and included in the definition of a new term - “Important Natural Resources”. Strategies have been amended to reflect the important-but-not-critical status of this new group.

3. The 31 page checklist has been moved from a required element to an optional technical assistance document.

The checklist has been unpopular with most stakeholders. They report that it has added substantial time and cost to the preparation of comp plans.

4. Consideration of Extreme Weather Events, Unusual Weather Patterns and Sea-Level Rise has been added.

A new analysis question, policy and strategy have been added to encourage planning for extreme weather events, unusual weather patterns and sea-level rise at the local level. Because of the broad implications of these issues, they are addressed in the Future Land Use chapter. The semi-annual data sets will include relevant material such as the report entitled Maine's Climate Future (UMO Climate Change Institute).

BROWNFIELDS NEWS

by Tom Martin

Are There Potential Brownfields Sites in Your Town?

HCPC is compiling a list of candidate sites for its next brownfields grant application. If you have abandoned or underutilized sites in your town that may have contamination problems, we would be interested in hearing from you. Examples of possible sites include automotive service stations, old manufacturing operations, commercial enterprises that involved the handling of hazardous materials, and various waterfront uses. We can arrange to have a DEP representative meet with you and conduct a preliminary site visit. Landowner permission is required for any site visit. Contact Tom Martin for more information.

Brownfields Site Investigations Reap Many Benefits

Hancock County is already benefiting from the current HCPC brownfields grant. For example, the town of Sullivan now has a first rate public access point to salt water at Gordon's Wharf. Brownfields funding was used to assess the site for contamination. Two sites in Ellsworth were also assessed and can now be redeveloped for commercial use. A clean-up plan is being prepared for another site that will be part of an aquaculture operation. *There was no cost to the property owners for the initial site assessment or the clean-up plan.* There are also revolving loan fund grants that can be used for actual site clean-up. Contact Tom Martin for more information.

CDBG NEWS

by Tom Martin

HCPC EFFORTS TO REOPEN THE STINSON CANNERY ARE SUCCESSFUL!

Through a partnership with the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development and the town of Gouldsboro, the HCPC obtained \$400,000 in CDBG funding to reopen the Stinson Cannery in Gouldsboro as a lobster processing facility. These funds will be used to create 40 jobs as the first step in creating a total of 115 jobs over the next three years. These will largely replace the 128 jobs lost when the Stinson facility, the last sardine cannery in the United States, closed in 2010. The CDBG funds are part of a larger \$8.9 million investment package by Live Lobster Company, Inc. to convert the sardine cannery into a state of the art lobster processing facility.

The facility should be a boon to the local lobster industry since most lobsters are now shipped for processing to plants in Atlantic Canada. A local processing facility will mean reduced shipping costs. It should also boost demand for lobsters.

The plant will cook and freeze lobsters and sell them to high-volume customers such as restaurant chains and cruise ship lines.

The HCPC staff would be happy to work with any community interested in seeking CDBG funds for job creation or job retention. We have a good working relationship with the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development and are experienced grant writers. Feel free to contact Tom Martin if you have any questions.

HCPC PLANS TO SEEK ANOTHER WELL & SEPTIC REPLACEMENT GRANT

The 2010 well and septic replacement grant program had approximately double the number of eligible applicants that could be funded. Failing wells and septic systems continue to be identified. This means that the county could benefit from another round of well and septic grant funding.

Due to cutbacks in CDBG funding, the competition for grants is going to be very stiff in the upcoming fiscal year. We are thus urging towns interested in learning more about this program to contact us now. We also need people who are willing to serve on an advisory committee. Feel free to contact Tom Martin for more information.

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING NEWS

by Tom Martin

HCPC has several solid waste and recycling technical assistance ventures underway. With solid waste disposal fees likely to increase substantially in the next few years, waste reduction and diversion strategies are more important than ever. We are available to meet with towns to discuss specific services that we can provide at no charge. Some examples are listed below but we are open to discussing any solid waste-related service. Our current ventures include:

1. Exploring Options for Asphalt Shingle Recycling

Asphalt shingles have potential reuse as pavement patching material. There is a firm in southern Maine that will collect the shingles and process them. This option has not proven economically viable for smaller transfer stations where it takes substantial time to collect a truck load of shingles. We are in discussions with a private operator who may have storage space for shingles. If your transfer station is looking for a way to remove shingles from your solid waste stream, let us know.

2. Promoting composting

This is occurring at multiple levels. First, our recently completed compost bin sale sold 14 bins. This allows homeowners to compost in their own backyard. In addition to providing a valuable soil amendment, it is estimated that each compost bin removes 500 pounds of organic matter from the solid waste stream a year. HCPC still has 6 bins available for purchase.

We are available to work with schools, other institutions, and restaurants on food composting. Pre-consumer food scraps (such as vegetable peelings and materials that don't contain fats or animal products) can be composted easily. Other food products need to be managed in a manner that does not attract pests or causes odors.

We are also working with the city of Ellsworth on developing a site where sewage sludge and shellfish waste can be composted. In addition to removing this material from the waste stream, there is high commercial demand for compost made from shellfish.

3. Reducing waste at its source

We are sharing informational materials on waste reduction for hospitals, schools, hotels, and other institutions. Examples include developing green purchasing policies that encourage the use of recycled materials and reduced or reusable packaging materials. It could also involve

establishing recycling bins throughout an establishment and changes in food services. Examples of the latter include replacing individual packages of mustard and ketchup with dispensers and using biodegradable food packaging at take-out food establishments.

**ELLSWORTH AREA HHW/UW
COLLECTION IS SCHEDULED
FOR SATURDAY,
AUGUST 20, 2011
FROM 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
ELLSWORTH HIGH SCHOOL**

For more information, contact Sheri Walsh at 667-7131.

**Noontime Rotary Club of Ellsworth to
host Electronic Waste Recycling Event
on July 23, 2011 at Home Depot Store,
Myrick Street, Ellsworth, from 9:00 AM
to 3:00 PM**

For those of you unable to attend the HCPC collection scheduled for August 20 (see related article above), please note this opportunity to recycle your electronic waste. This event is open to residents from any community and items may be recycled for free. The Noontime Rotary Club will accept donations for its mentoring projects. **Please note this collection is for electronic waste only. Household Hazardous Waste will not be accepted at the July 23 event.**

The Noontime Club is partnering with e-Waste Recycling Solutions LLC (ERS) of Auburn, which will bring a team to pack and transport the collected material. Rotary Club members, wearing bright orange t-shirts, will help with traffic, parking and unloading vehicles. The primary focus is on collecting electronic devices and lighting and other universal waste. This includes televisions (all sizes), computers and computer peripherals, copiers, printers, fax machines, stereos, DVD players, cell phones, remote controls, VCRs, projectors, digital cameras, tape players, PDAs,

speakers, telephones, two-way radios, answering machines, camcorders, CD players, DVD players, electric typewriters, game systems, pagers, microwaves, and toner cartridges. For more information, contact Rick Sealander at 266-5822.

Free recycling is available for individuals. A fee schedule for businesses interested in the July 23 collection is available by calling Rick Clark, ERS at 449-1709.

TRANSPORTATION NEWS

by Jim Fisher

Acadia Byway Wins 2010 Scenic Byway Grant

The Federal Highway Administration announced awards under the America's Byways Program in April. The state received far less funding this round than in past years. Two grants were funded, a major corridor planning study for the Saint John's Valley and a grant of \$52,000 for visitor wayfinding and beautification. This proposal harkens back to the founding of the byways program during the Johnson Administration. Every First Lady takes on a limited number of causes and Lady Bird took the lead on beautifying America. Her projects ranged from reducing litter and planting trees to advocating for the creation of parkways that would provide travelers with a scenic corridor serving but not looking like fast growing and haphazard suburban sprawl.

The 2010 Acadia Byway Proposal will provide funds to build travelers awareness that they have entered an All American Road, the upper echelon among scenic byways. Funds will help to create a gateway monument at the Ellsworth-Trenton Town line as well the head of Mount Desert Island. Funds will also be used to encourage landscaping, more attractive signage, lighting and other improvements along Route 3 in Trenton and Bar Harbor.

Looking ahead to 2011 the Corridor Committee has submitted a funding proposal that would create new interpretive locations at the Hancock County / Bar Harbor Airport, the Trenton Sea Plane Ramp

and port facility in Bar Harbor. The interpretive information will highlight regional history, scenery and recreational opportunities and we hope will serve all modes of travel, including auto, bus, bicycle, air and sea.

Context Sensitive Solutions Project Concludes

One important step toward realizing the goal of a multimodal scenic byway is the recently concluded Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) project on Route 3 in Bar Harbor between Ireson Hill (Pirates Cove) and the village. A collaborative group of Bar Harbor leaders, businesses and residents, Acadia National Park, MaineDOT, UMaine-Cooperative Extension and the Hancock County Planning Commission met through the winter and early spring to forge a consensus about ways to improve Route 3 that will increase safety, reduce traffic backups and improve the travel surfaces for all users.

Planners, landscape architects, legal advisor and highway engineers joined many of the meetings to learn from local representatives and to propose solutions that are consistent with local values.

Participants identified solutions that are appropriate to the location, often choosing widening and other standards that are well below standards set by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). For instance, AASHTO standards recommend twelve foot travel lanes and eight foot shoulders along this busy corridor. This report recommends eleven foot travel lanes, four to five foot shoulders and sidewalks where the population is more concentrated. By adhering to tighter standards, the total road width remains within the approximately fifty foot wide right of way for almost the entire length.

Perhaps the most important consequence of this intensive public involvement in the planning process is the unusual level of local support for the project. Rather than facing a litany of criticism and protest, MaineDOT has a set of recommendations with strong local backing. This can dramatically

lower the cost of project engineering and construction.

Details about the project including maps and photographs, and links to information about the CSS process are posted to www.hcpcme.org/barharbor/css. We think this is a model for future corridor planning efforts in Hancock County.

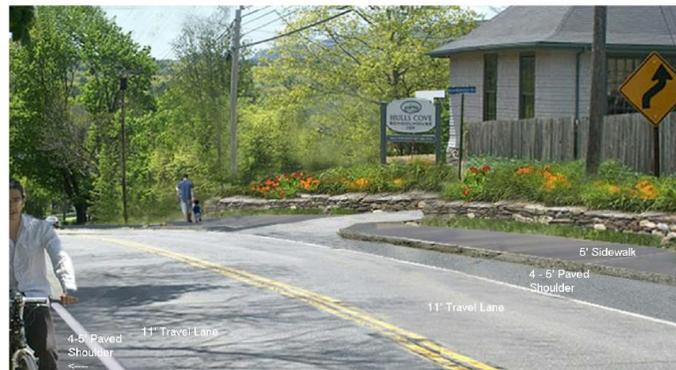


Figure 4 Conceptual Illustration of Sidewalk and Shoulders

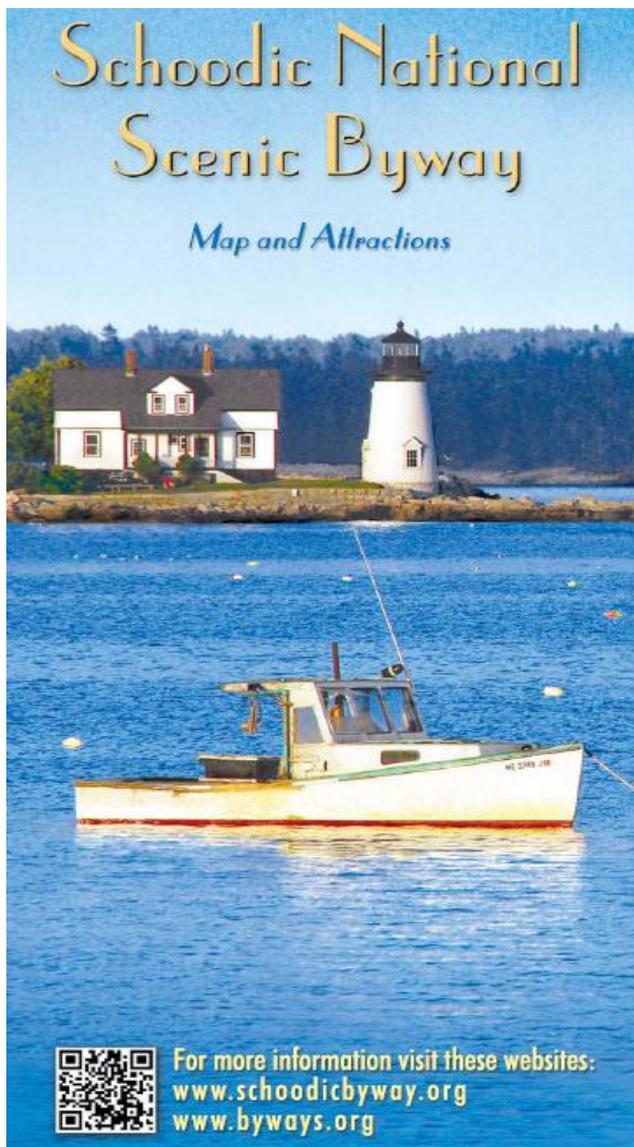


Figure 6 Conceptual Illustration of Sidewalk, Esplanade and Shoulders on Hill to Park Entrance

Schoodic Byway Launches New Brochure

The Schoodic National Scenic Byway received designation in 2000. At that time the Route 1 and Route 186 corridor connecting Hancock and Prospect Harbor had major deficiencies. Other than Acadia National Park's Schoodic section, there was only one unimproved scenic turnout and one struggling picnic spot on Route 1. Over the past decade byway funds have constructed new facilities on Taunton Bay, Frenchman Bay and Winter Harbor and a new gateway facility will be constructed in Prospect Harbor this summer. We

have much to celebrate and much to communicate. The Corridor Committee, with financial support for the National Scenic Byways program and technical support from MaineDOT is set to release a new map brochure that highlights the region's many historic, scenic and recreational assets. In addition to printed brochures, an electronic, interactive brochure is in the works for www.schoodicbyway.org.



Sunrise Trail Wins Awards and Grants

The Down East Sunrise Trail was formally opened



for year round use in October, 2010. This winter's heroic snowfall made the trail a popular recreational corridor for snowmobiles and cross country skis. The trail closed temporarily during mud season, but reopened and has been getting heavy use, particularly on weekends.

The good news is that this project has garnered recognition and additional financial support. The Maine Association of Planners has recognized the Down East Sunrise Trail as the 2011 Project of the Year. The Bureau of Parks and Lands has secured two significant grants for making improvements to trail infrastructure, such as picnic tables, privies and informational signage as well as a smaller grant that will enable HCPC and BP&L staff to create new trail maps and brochures.

One of our challenges is friction between different trail users. Basic courtesy works most of the time, but we are hearing complaints about unsafe and inconsiderate behavior on the trail. We will continue to work with the trail manager (Charlie.corliss@maine.gov), and town governments to resolve and hopefully prevent conflicts.

This trail has been heralded as a great success, but like most successes this one will require ongoing maintenance and supervision. For additional information about trail activities, visit www.sunrisetrail.org or contact Jim Fisher at HCPC.

HCPC RECEIVES WATER AND WASTE WATER TRAINING GRANT

HCPC received a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to supplement the code enforcement officer (CEO) and local plumbing inspector (LPI) training provided by the State Planning Office (SPO). Budget cutbacks have reduced the number of state-sponsored CEO/LPI training sessions. These workshops will complement those HCPC has held through its *Striking a Balance* series.

Also, HCPC will provide educational materials to homeowners on the care and maintenance of septic systems.

The training is part of a larger HCPC effort to address failing wells and septic systems in Hancock County. In collaboration with Washington Hancock Community Agency, HCPC is planning to seek another round of Community Development Block Grant funding for well and septic replacement. A related challenge is promoting sound maintenance and use of systems so that they continue to function soundly. This may involve installing water conservation devices in houses and increasing awareness of activities that could damage septic systems. For more information, contact Tom Martin at the HCPC.

GIS NEWS

by Jim Fisher

LIDAR Has Landed

LIDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) “is an optical remote sensing technology that can measure the distance to, or other properties of a target by illuminating the target with light, often using pulses from a laser.” (Wikipedia) The Maine Office of Geographic Information Systems (MEGIS) and the US Geological Survey teamed up with agencies from New York to Maine to create our most detailed aerial survey of elevations ever. Last fall and this spring planes equipped with high speed light imaging equipment have flown the coastal strip of the entire northeastern United States. The data turned around in six months and HCPC has become a regional data distribution hub.

HCPC recently upgraded our mapping capacity with a more advanced version of geographic information software. Several projects have motivated this upgrade, two of which merit a quick mention. Many towns in Hancock County are wrestling with increasing applications for cell towers and wind generating towers and the impact these would have on livability and future development prospects. To be effective towers

need to have good line of site or good prospects for wind. Elevation maps, a sort of colored topographic image, have provided local committees with a quick impression of likely places for future tower applications. These maps are only a starting point, but they are quick to prepare, and in many cases we’ve already created them.

Our second initiative is collaboration with the University of Maine - Machias to complete the process of digitizing all of the tax maps in Hancock County. This is a challenging process, made possible by the faculty and students at the University with some logistical support from the Hancock County Planning Commission. The process is nearing completion, though we’re learning that some town tax maps apparently do not share a common border with other towns. Some towns would appear to be in other towns. These discrepancies point to one of many challenges when towns work in isolation. As differences are resolved, we are preparing digital maps for interested towns. These maps give each town the ability to view tax maps along with environmental features like wetlands, topography and zoning, zoom in on specific locations of interest, label the parcels, and print maps for specific proposals or development reviews. Contact HCPC for your digital maps.

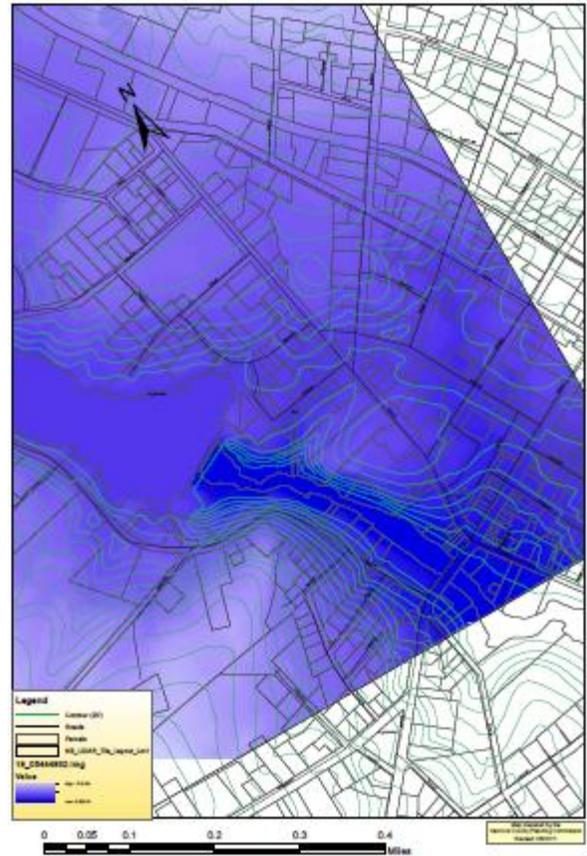
Unlike aerial photography LIDAR produces literally billions of very specific distance measurements in a cloud of points. These detailed measurements of elevation enable highly specific topographic or contour data, including detection of the ground as well as the tree canopy.

One application that many property owners will welcome is better information about where their properties are in the floodplain and where the floodplain maps may be incorrect. Historically we have not had the information necessary to contest inaccurate floodplain designations. LIDAR data may finally help to rectify past errors.

As Hancock County confronts ongoing rising sea level as well as heightened storm activity, HCPC

will work with state and local leaders to identify critical infrastructure that should be modified as it reaches obsolescence. Most of our coastal communities have roads, drainage systems or other infrastructure that are already perilously close to flooding in tidal storm surges. We hope that more detailed elevation data will help us to avoid crises through long range infrastructure planning.

We will be working with a small team of GIS experts in Hancock County to better identify problems and inform local leaders about their prevention options. We will also collaborate with Hancock County EMA to identify emergency response strategies for storm surge scenarios. Hancock County towns with GIS capability are invited to bring their hard drives (150 GB capacity) to HCPC to copy the LIDAR data.



Hancock County Planning Commission is a partner with local and county government to: protect our heritage and resources, plan for the future and promote a sound economy for the people of Hancock County.

Summer 2011 Newsletter



395 State Street
Ellsworth, ME 04605

**NONPROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT No. 95
Ellsworth, ME 04605**

Change Service Requested