

REGIONAL CREATIVE COUNCIL

*Connecting People
With Our Heritage, Culture and Place*



TRI-COUNTY REGION CULTURAL PLAN

*For
Southern Aroostook, Northern Penobscot & Northern Washington
Counties*

Tri-County Region Cultural Plan

REINHOLT CONSULTING, DECEMBER 2017



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Photo Credit: Island Falls Lakes Association, for more information, visit: www.facebook.com/Island-Falls-Lakes-Association-233596052046

FORWARD

Dear Friends,

The Regional Creative Council (RCC) is thrilled to present this Cultural Plan for the Tri-County Region of Southern Aroostook, Northern Penobscot & Northern Washington Counties! This plan is the culmination of nearly three years of work and represents a collaborative effort of several organizations, businesses, individuals and municipalities from throughout the region. The Cultural Plan provides us with a wonderful mix of ideas to cultivate over the next five years.

The Tri-County Region is rich with natural beauty, native heritage, creative individuals, industrious businesses and strong community ties. There is a respect for the area's history and a desire to preserve it that is combined with a passion to see our towns prosper and grow. The goals identified in the Cultural Plan provide some of the tools to move our communities forward.

We appreciate all the individuals, businesses and organizations who took the time to complete surveys and participate in public meetings. The input, ideas and vision generated through these processes led to a Cultural Plan that is reflective of the entire region. The goals, objectives and strategies are ambitious while being attainable with a continued cooperative approach.

We encourage our area municipalities to adopt the Tri-County Cultural Plan and to remain part of the process moving forward. We encourage individuals throughout the region to read the plan, get inspired and get involved!

Linda Faucher, Cary Library Director

Nancy Ketch, Houlton Community Development Director

Tracy Rockwell, Houlton Higher Education Center Director

Iva Sussman, Houlton Community Arts Center Council Board Member/Cary Library Trustee

Tri-County Region Cultural Planning

Connecting People with Heritage, Culture, and Place

The Regional Creative Council (RCC) was formed to enhance the artistic, cultural, educational and economic climate within our entire Tri-County Region of Southern Aroostook, Northern Penobscot and Northern Washington Counties. The RCC has engaged artisans, government representatives, and community advocates to evaluate the cultural needs of our Tri-County Region. While the RCC was initiated by the Houlton Community Arts Center Council, Southern Aroostook Cultural Arts Project, Town of Houlton Community Development Department, Cary Library and the Houlton Higher Education Center, our regional meetings have included representatives from throughout the entire geographical area.



Photo Credit: Patten Lumbermen's Museum, for more information, visit www.lumbermuseum.org

APPRECIATION

Regional Creative Council Steering Committee

MEMBER	AFFILIATION/FIELD	HOME TOWN
Kristi Brannen	Co-owner, Spring Break Maple & Honey/SADC Board Member	Smyrna
Marie Carmichael	Director, Houlton Parks & Recreation Department, Town of Houlton	Houlton
Heidi Dolomont	Artist	Hodgdon
Elizabeth Dulin	Community Advocate	Littleton
Linda Faucher	Director, Cary Library, Houlton	Ludlow
Dorothy Fitzpatrick	Community Advocate	Houlton
Wade Hanson	Tribal Planner, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians	Houlton
Phyllis Hersey, RN	Musician – Singer/Songwriter	Houlton
Diane Hines	Town Manager, Town of Ludlow & Reed Plantation/Artist	Hammond
Nancy Ketch	Director, Houlton Community Development Department, Town of Houlton	Houlton
Cecily L. MacKinnon	Art Teacher	Patten
Candy McKellar	Artist/Painter & Retired Art Teacher	Sherman
Jon McLaughlin	Executive Director, Southern Aroostook Development Corporation (SADC)	Houlton
Debbie Melvin	Educator/Board Member, Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum, Littleton	Monticello
Stephen Mine	Board Member, East Grand Lake Region Chamber of Commerce, Danforth & Woodie Wheaton Land Trust, Forest City	Weston
Brian Reynolds	Tribal Administrator, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians	Houlton
Eva Rice	Artist/Retired Art Teacher	Mount Chase
Tracy Rockwell	Director, Houlton Higher Education Center	Hodgdon
Richard Silliboy	Artist/Master Basket Maker, Aroostook Band of Micmacs	Littleton
Iva Sussman	Trustee, Cary Library, Houlton/Board Member, Houlton Community Arts Center Council	Houlton
Jane Torres	Executive Director, Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce	Houlton
Olivia White	Dancer & Student	Houlton
Kristen Wittine	Educator	Danforth

APPRECIATION

THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING MEETING SPACE:

Houlton Higher Education Center
East Grand School, Danforth
Patten Lumbermen's Museum

ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS:

Aroostook Band of Micmacs
Aroostook County Historical and Art Museum of
Houlton
Cary Library
County Co-op and Farm Store
Greater East Grand Lake Area Chamber of
Commerce
Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce
Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
Houlton Community Arts Center Council
Houlton Community Development Department
Houlton Higher Education Center
Houlton Parks and Recreation Department
Houlton Pioneer Times
Houlton Regional Health Services Foundation
Houlton Rotary Club
Houlton Star Bright Children's Theater

Patten Lumbermen's Museum
Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum
Southern Aroostook Community Arts Project
Southern Aroostook Development Corporation
Town of Amity
Town of Bridgewater
Cary Plantation
Town of Crystal
Town of Dyer Brook
Town of Danforth
Town of Hammond
Town of Haynesville
Town of Hersey
Town of Hodgdon
Town of Houlton
Town of Island Falls
Town of Linneus
Town of Littleton
Town of Ludlow
Town of Merrill
Town of Monticello
Moro Plantation
Town of Mount Chase
Town of New Limerick

Town of Oakfield
Town of Orient
Town of Patten
Reed Plantation
Town of Sherman
Town of Smyrna
Town of Stacyville
Town of Weston
WAGM TV
WHOU 100.1 FM Radio/ Fred Grant

PHOTO CREDITS:

Farm/Art DTour
Greater East Grand Lake Area Chamber of
Commerce
Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce
Henry Gartley
High Peaks Creative Council
Island Falls Lakes Association
Oakfield Railroad Museum
Patten Lumbermen's Museum
Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the Regional Creative Council (RCC) was formed in order to establish Tri-County Region connections between cultural organizations, business groups, and community leaders. The group met for a year to prepare for the cultural planning process. In 2016, the RCC was awarded the Maine Arts Commission Creative Communities=Economic Development Phase 1 Grant to fund the creation of a cultural plan. This funding was matched by the Maine Community Foundation's Community Building Grant and from the Betterment Fund. Reinholt Consulting LLC was contracted to complete the study on cultural development.

The Tri-County Region has many cultural assets including immense natural beauty; sweeping views of Maine's tallest mountain, Katahdin, international lakes, world class rivers, and abundant agricultural lands. There is a variety of artists and crafters living and working in the region; perhaps attracted by the sheer beauty of the environment. The greatest asset is the community itself, woven together in a longstanding pattern of uninhibited support for people and places. This pattern binds intergenerational connections across the community. The Tri-County Region is arguably one of the most generous and authentic places in Maine.

Cultural planning is an effective tool that works to support the resiliency of communities grappling with shifting economics and populations. Communities across rural Maine are seeking to address declining populations. In order to keep towns sustainable, communities are working to attract and retain youth. Opportunities exist to draw people in with the advent of increasing the flexibility of choosing where to locate and work from. Young entrepreneurs are interested in places that offer a creative atmosphere, a high quality of life, and a supportive environment for new business. Communities that provide strong arts and cultural programming appeal to young people and families.

The Tri-County Region Cultural Plan lays out four goals, objectives, and recommendations for action which will enable the region to bolster its creative and cultural assets. This cultural development roadmap helps to define why arts, heritage, and cultural resources are at the core of balanced economic vitality and social well-being. The study examines regional arts, heritage, and cultural resources and proposes useful actions to link cultural work to wider community agendas. Its implementation will fortify the creative sector, build cultural opportunities, and benefit regional economic and community development.

METHODOLOGY

To access background material and complete data sets from the surveys and public meetings, visit:

reinholtconsulting.com/tri-county

Data points below refer to respondents to the Tri-County Public Opinion Survey.

Initial Research

Reinholt Consulting reviewed plans and reports from local and regional sources including economic development organizations, municipal offices, community initiatives, arts and cultural organizations, and other relevant entities.

Qualitative Data Gathering

A series of four public meetings were facilitated around the region to collect input from communities and to explore the public's perception of the region's strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and realities. Close to 50 people participated in these meetings.

Quantitative Data Gathering

Reinholt Consulting developed surveys for the following three populations: general public, artists and crafters, and cultural organizations and creative businesses. Surveys vetted common themes drawn from qualitative data gathering and to assess supply and demand of creative offerings. There were 241 Public Opinion Survey participants.

Identifying Goals

Goals and objectives were identified through careful analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Feedback was sought on data findings and recommended goals through a series of public meetings and interviews. A core group of cross-sector community leaders participated in these meetings.

Refining the Draft Plan

Meetings with the public and lead organizations were held to discuss and improve the recommended actions and strategies. A core group of cross-sector community leaders participated in these meetings.

ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW

The plan has been designed to be a resource to help guide cultural development. Each goal emerged from data that supports the recommendations for action. This information is useful to reference when preparing applications for funding and creating capital campaigns. In interest of keeping this document succinct and accessible, all supporting materials, including qualitative and quantitative data sets, are available at: reinholtconsulting.com/tri-county

The following section is the core of the Tri-County Region Cultural Plan. It is the culmination of an eighteen-month planning process. The goals, objectives, and strategies laid out in the action plan are imbedded in values, priorities, and aspirations identified through a process of inclusive public engagement. Efforts were made to ensure the final outcome was based on a broad cross-section of the community.

The action plan is organized into four goals that reflect challenges and opportunities that emerged from community based qualitative and quantitative data collection. Each goal represents a section of the action plan and is broken down by objectives, strategies, and sub-strategies. Goals are of equal importance.

Each of the four goals are accompanied by 1) Findings that support the goal and 2) Examples and/or resources intended to inform and inspire implementation. At the end of the action plan is an implementation table that includes goals, objectives, and strategies, as well as additional details including suggested key players, and timeline. This implementation grid is intended to serve as a tool for those organizations and individuals who are actively involved in carrying out the Tri-County Region Cultural Plan.



Photo Credit: Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum, for more information, visit: www.oldplow.net

GOALS

The following table provides an overview of the goals and objectives established through the cultural planning process:

A	<p>RAISE THE VISIBILITY OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL ASSETS IN THE TRI-COUNTY REGION</p> <p>Objective A.1 Utilize effective marketing and promotion to boost local engagement and tourism.</p>	<p>The Tri-County Region has an abundance of natural scenic beauty, artisans and crafters, agricultural assets, recreational opportunities, and cultural heritage. With coordinated strategic promotion, the region will position itself to attract destination based tourism.</p>
B	<p>GROW A ROBUST CREATIVE ECONOMY THAT ATTRACTS AND RETAINS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS</p> <p>Objective B.1 Develop tools and resources to support creative initiatives and individuals.</p> <p>Objective B.2 Boost capacity of cultural organizations.</p>	<p>Providing support mechanisms and resources for creative enterprises provides an environment that attracts innovators, young adults, and families. Fostering a creative economy is an important tool for civic revitalization and retaining local talent.</p>
C	<p>CELEBRATE AND PRESERVE COMMUNITY HISTORY AND TRADITIONS THROUGH CREATIVE PUBLIC PROJECTS</p> <p>Objective C.1 Support existing and encourage new projects that promote rural placemaking.</p>	<p>Creative public projects provide opportunities to celebrate local heritage while enhancing community pride and sense of place. Meaningful public projects bring communities together around positive stories, messages, and visual icons that help establish a creative community environment.</p>
D	<p>INCREASE RELEVANCY AND ACCESS TO ARTS AND CULTURE FOR MULTIGENERATIONAL AUDIENCES</p> <p>Objective D.1 Expand opportunities for youth to experience arts and culture.</p> <p>Objective D.2 Develop methods to increase participation in arts and cultural offerings.</p>	<p>Youth who have access to strong foundations in the arts enjoy the benefits of developing creative thinking skills early on. They often excel in other academic subjects and achieve higher S.A.T. scores. For all populations, increased creative experiences help to encourage healthy pathways, improve quality of life, promote lifelong learning, and address social isolation.</p>

Raise the Profile of Existing Assets

The Tri-County Region has an abundance of natural scenic beauty, artisans and crafters, agricultural assets, recreational opportunities, and cultural heritage. With coordinated strategic promotion, the region will position itself to attract destination-based tourism.

From the Tri-County Region Community...

The following insights are drawn from data collected during the cultural planning process through surveys and community conversations.

Tourism is already an important economic driver for the region and could be further enhanced by leveraging the region's creative assets through careful marketing and development.

98% agree that creative assets and recreation should promote opportunities to residents, visitors, and tourists

77% feel that growing arts, cultural, and recreational based tourism is very important to the future

67% are very interested in cultural tours, trails, and itineraries

Enhanced visibility and recognition of the Tri-County Region as a cultural destination through strategic marketing and promotion of the region's assets could amplify the tourism industry while raising awareness among residents of what's available in their own back yard.

Less than a quarter of all respondents reported having a high level of awareness of information on arts, cultural, and recreational offerings

77% turn to online and social media sources to find information on arts, culture, and recreation

Goal A

RAISE THE VISIBILITY OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL ASSETS IN THE TRI-COUNTY REGION

GOAL A. RAISE THE VISIBILITY OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL ASSETS IN THE TRI-COUNTY REGION

Objective A.1

Utilize effective marketing and promotion to boost local engagement and tourism.

Actions

Work with Aroostook County Tourism (ACT) in creation of a regional asset map.

Inventory arts, cultural, and historic assets.

- Encourage regional websites to provide links to the online asset map.

Enhance regional customer service aimed at connecting visitors with quality experiences.

- Utilize the Welcome ME! training program provided through the Maine Office of Economic and Community Development.

Establish a Regional Creative Council (RCC) networking group comprised of representatives from arts, cultural, historical, recreational, and business organizations.

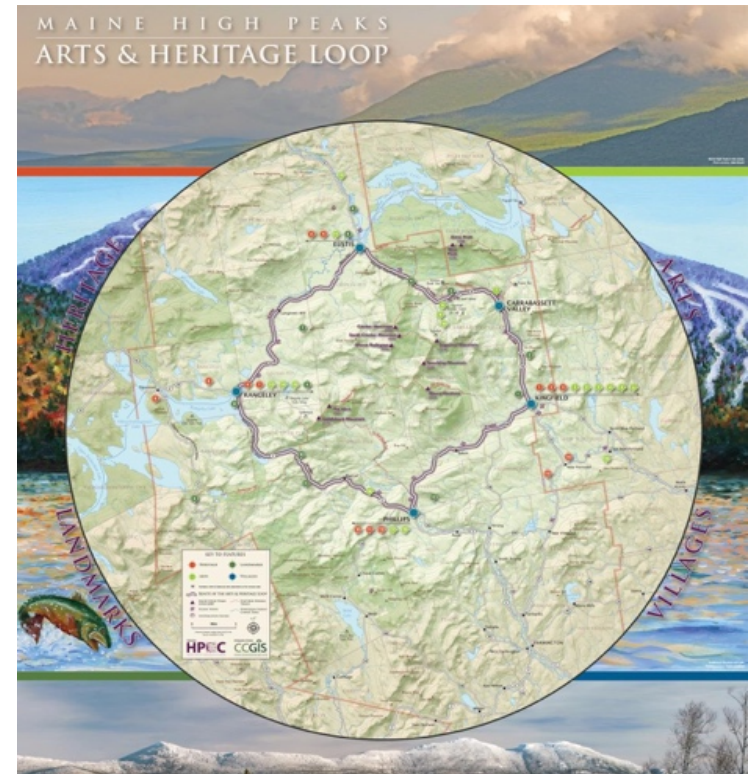
- Meet regularly to build trust and collaborative promotion efforts.
- Establish an e-newsletter featuring regional cultural offerings.
- Create a website for the Regional Creative Council; develop an online regional comprehensive calendar of cultural offerings and events.
- Encourage stakeholders to make use of the MTA and MDOT online event calendars.
- Establish Pecha Kucha gatherings to showcase creative and cultural organizations and individuals. <http://www.pechakucha.org/>

Establish funding for a RCC part time coordinator.

Create and distribute a tourism toolkit to area hospitality businesses.

- Include available brochures from regional assets.

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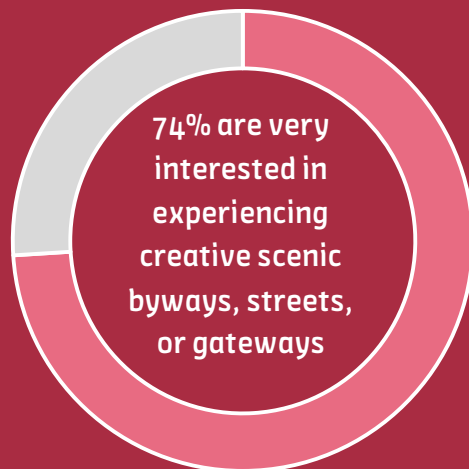
Cultural Asset Mapping, Maine High Peaks

HOW CAN A NETWORKING GROUP RAISE THE VISIBILITY OF RURAL CULTURAL STRENGTHS?

The Western Maine non-profit, High Peaks Creative Council (HPCC), was formed in 2013 after receiving the Maine Arts Commission Creative Communities = Economic Development grant. Their mission is to connect regional arts and cultural organizations around creative public projects that benefit the quality of life and support resiliency in the local economy. The HPCC hosts regular networking meetings with the cultural, business, and municipal sectors. Together, the group created and manages an online cultural asset map, a printed map/guide of the region, and five kiosks. The project led to creation of the popular self-guided cultural destination tour: Maine High Peaks Arts & Heritage Loop.

Visit www.highpeaksloop.com for more information

The Tri-County Region culture is bound to its natural assets and working lands...



GOAL A. RAISE THE VISIBILITY OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL ASSETS IN THE TRI-COUNTY REGION

Objective A.1

Utilize effective marketing and promotion to boost local engagement and tourism.

Actions

Build capacity for marketing and promotion.

- Research and pursue marketing grants.
- Pool resources with partner organizations to build a revenue stream for collaborative marketing.
- Utilize online tools to collect donations.
- Establish an annual appeal.

Explore options for creating a printed map and guide of regional arts, cultural, historic, and natural features.

- Distribute through Maine Tourism Association Visitor Information Centers, local chambers and other visitor centers.
- Consider providing advertising space to help pay for costs.

Explore working with Maine Trail Finder to raise the visibility of Tri-County Region public trails.

Work with Maine D.O.T. categorical signs program to develop signage to identify historic sites and public trails.

Ensure the cultural sector participates in planning initiatives for the Katahdin Woods and Water National Monument; invite Katahdin Woods and Water National Monument representatives to regional planning forums.

Strengthen the Economy

Providing support mechanisms and resources for creative enterprises provides an environment that attracts innovators, young adults, and families. Fostering a creative economy is an important tool for civic revitalization and retaining local talent.

From the Tri-County Region Community...

The following insights are drawn from data collected during the cultural planning process through surveys and community conversations.

Like much of rural Maine, communities of the Tri-County Region cope with challenges associated with struggling economies and population decline. By nurturing a vibrant creative sector, the Tri-County Region can enhance its appeal to new residents and business. Charles Fluharty, President and CEO of the Rural Policy Research Institute, advises that **"you need arts in rural America so that the next generation wants to come there and live."**

94% of respondents agree that arts, culture, and recreation should add to regional economic vitality

9 out of 10 respondents agree that arts, culture, and recreation should attract new residents, talent, and businesses

Engaging businesses and local governments in arts initiatives helps to cultivate a supportive environment for arts and cultural organizations to operate.

72% of respondents feel that building support for the creative and cultural sector is very important to the future

64% of respondents agree that municipalities should support arts, cultural, and recreational development through financial incentives

Goal B

GROW A ROBUST CREATIVE ECONOMY THAT ATTRACTS AND RETAINS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Resources & Inspiration

THE TOUR OF EMPTY BUILDINGS, WEBSTER CITY, IOWA

The closing of Webster City's largest employer left the City of approximately 8,000 residents in a state of economic decline, with a growing number of vacant properties.

In an effort to bring attention to vacant properties, the local Chamber of Commerce worked with property owners to organize a Tour of Empty Buildings, promoting vacant commercial properties as community assets.

CITIZENS INSTITUTE ON RURAL DESIGN (CIRD)

WWW.RURAL-DESIGN.ORG

CIRD works with rural communities across the country to implement actionable strategies to local challenges through use of creative design. Through their online resource library, CIRD hosts case studies, guides, and publications curated from leading sources in the field of creative placemaking.

Places Stories

The benefits of local breweries...

As the craft brewing industry has grown, many rural communities have seen an economic benefit both from the breweries themselves and by producing ingredients the breweries use, such as hops.

Bryce Oates, the Daily Yonder

GOAL B. GROW A ROBUST CREATIVE ECONOMY THAT ATTRACTS AND RETAINS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Objective B.1

Develop tools to support creative initiatives and individuals.

Actions

Continue to facilitate programs that encourage innovation, such as the entrepreneur challenge.

Encourage regional businesses to make use of online tools including Google Places.

- Create a postcard outlining the benefits and steps to register with Google Places.

Work with local economic development groups to create a narrative on arts and culture for use in business attraction promotional materials.

- Target businesses compatible with agriculture, such as micro-breweries and farm-to-table restaurants.

Facilitate social media workshops for creative enterprises.

Establish RCC online tools and resources for creative enterprises.

- Establish an online directory of artists, crafters, and makers.
- Create an inventory of empty commercial spaces appropriate for creative enterprises, make listings available online.

Work with property owners to consider leasing spaces for reduced or affordable rents for creative start-ups and pop-up shops.

- Look at successful models such as, 'Empty Spaces Project'.

Reinvigorate Southern Aroostook Community Arts Project.

- Evaluate establishing a regional School of Woods and Water Painters; establish and promote an annual show of paintings displayed in the region; and, consider booking shows at the State House and other prominent locations.

GOAL B. GROW A ROBUST CREATIVE ECONOMY THAT ATTRACTS AND RETAINS YOUTH

Objective B.2

Boost capacity of cultural organizations.

Actions

Encourage municipalities to adopt all or part of this document as an official town plan.

Encourage cultural organizations to develop and promote internship opportunities.

- Work with regional schools to help identify potential interns.

Raise public awareness of the value arts and culture have on quality of life and economic development, to help garner support.

- Develop a public relations/communication plan to tout social and economic benefits of art and cultural offerings.
- Implement a system for collecting and publicizing audience testimonials on why arts and culture matter.
- Participate in the Americans for the Arts, Arts and Economic Prosperity Studies.

Expand volunteerism by offering incentives.

Celebrate and build recognition for volunteers.

Engaging youth through volunteerism

In their 2014 report, *Youth Volunteers; Engaging Communities, Changing Lives*, aimed at promoting the engagement of youth as valued participants in achieving sustainable development, the United Nations Volunteers program argues that...

"Volunteerism engages communities and individuals from the bottom up, and has the power to create transformational impacts on both the volunteers themselves and on the communities where they engage... volunteerism offers valuable opportunities for youth engagement and leadership to contribute to peaceful and inclusive societies."



Photo Credit: Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum

Celebrate Local Heritage

Creative public projects provide opportunities to celebrate local heritage while enhancing community pride and sense of place. Meaningful public projects bring communities together around positive stories, messages, and visual icons that help establish a creative community environment.

From the Tri-County Region Community...

The following insights are drawn from data collected during the cultural planning process through surveys and community conversations.

Many in the Tri-County Region place great value on preserving local heritage and traditions in addition to significant interest and engagement in natural resources and outdoor spaces. "One sign of a healthy community is its simultaneous ability to preserve and invent its culture – that is, to conserve its history and heritage while developing new expressions for current times". ~ American Planning Association

8 out of 10 respondents feel that preserving the community's heritage and traditions is very important to the future
93% of respondents agree that arts, culture, and recreation should reflect our diverse people and cultures

The American Planning Association encourages communities to utilize "venues such as parks, open spaces, and public streetscapes as places for arts and cultural expressions which can be an effective way to integrate history and heritage into the everyday lived experience."

67% of respondents feel that creating visual markers identifying landmarks and gateways is very important to the future
80% of respondents are very interested in experiencing arts, cultural, and recreational offerings at parks, trails, waterbodies, etc.

WHAT IS 'PLACEMAKING'?

"In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire and be inspired."

National Endowment for the Arts

Goal C

CELEBRATE AND PRESERVE COMMUNITY HISTORY AND TRADITIONS THROUGH CREATIVE PUBLIC PROJECTS

GOAL C. CELEBRATE AND PRESERVE COMMUNITY HISTORY AND TRADITIONS THROUGH CREATIVE PUBLIC PROJECTS

Objective C.1

Support existing and encourage new projects that promote rural placemaking.

Actions

Establish a historic placemaking committee comprised of stakeholders, in order to develop a plan for implementing and funding projects.

Connect the rural landscape with innovative tours and itineraries featuring cultural attractions and landmarks.

- Look at successful models such as Maine High Peaks Arts and Heritage Loop.
- Promote local heritage trails.

Boost the Northern Maine Quilt Barn Trail.

- Explore collaborating with Friends and Needles Quilt Guild to build opportunities to help support expansion of the trail and to create a map guide of the Northern Maine Quilt Barn Trail.

Develop temporary historic exhibitions in downtowns.

- Investigate reproducing historic photographs of lumbering history, agricultural history, and community life onto large scale banners for exterior and interior displays.

Collaborate to develop a regional history tour app that enables users to participate in self-guided tours.

Encourage communities to explore options for establishing 'Museum in the Streets'.

- Follow guidance provided through the Museum in the Streets website.
(<http://www.themuseuminthestreets.com/>)

Encourage Native Americans to share their history and current realities through the arts.

Explore the feasibility of expanding historical attractions at scenic gateways and scenic byway turnouts.



Photo Credit: Farm/Art DTour

Farm/Art DTour, Sauk County, Wisconsin

HOW DO YOU CELEBRATE AGRICULTURAL TRADITIONS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE?

Promoted as a "50 + mile free, self-guided Agri/Cultural excursion", the Farm/Art DTour offers a unique exploration of scenic working farmlands enhanced by temporary art installations, educational signs, artist-built mobile farm stands, pasture performances, and roadside poetry. Farm/Art DTour demonstrates what can happen when agriculture and the arts unite.

Building on the success of an existing event, the Farm/Art DTour is a biennial feature of the annual Fermentation Fest, benefiting from the 15,000 attendees drawn to the festival each year. Sauk County officials understand the direct quality of life benefit that the arts bring to the region and how the arts can help retain the area's youth who tend to migrate to larger nearby cities. "By attracting artists to the region, the DTour gave Reedsburg a reason to strategically invest in order to retain young people and attract live/work professionals." The DTour aims to draw visitors from urban areas, where the growing interest in connecting with where food is grown has helped catalyze the agri-tourism industry.

Visit fermentationfest.com for more information

Serving Audiences of All Ages

Youth who have access to strong foundations in the arts enjoy the benefits of developing creative thinking skills early on. They often excel in other academic subjects and achieve higher S.A.T. scores. For all populations, increased creative experiences help to encourage healthy pathways, improve quality of life, promote lifelong learning, and address social isolation.

From the Tri-County Region Community...

The following insights are drawn from data collected during the cultural planning process through surveys and community conversations.

Engaging youth in creative activities stood out as a prominent theme in both community conversations and the Tri-County Region Public Opinion survey.

9 out of 10 support putting time and resources towards ensuring youth have access to arts, cultural, and recreational experiences

Close to half identified cost and driving distance as factors that prevent them from participating in offerings as often as they would like

97% agree that arts, culture, and recreation should be accessible and affordable to all

Research from the National Endowment for the Arts indicates that rural arts organizations rely heavily on audience and community feedback in developing programming and are more likely to draw audiences from surrounding communities than those located in urban areas. Responding to community interests can help Tri-County Region cultural organizations grow their audiences through expanded reach and relevance.

At least 8 out of 10 respondents show a high interest in both live music/concerts and outdoor events

74% are very interested in farmer's markets and agricultural activities

82% are very interested in outdoor recreations

Goal D

INCREASE RELEVANCY AND ACCESS TO ARTS AND CULTURE FOR MULTIGENERATIONAL AUDIENCES

Youth Art Month, Council for Arts Education

HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONS CELEBRATE YOUTH ART?

Youth Art Month is a program of the Council for Arts Education that works to do just that by providing communities with resources and strategies aimed at recognizing art education and youth art.

National Youth Art Month program exists to:

- Recognize art education as a viable factor in the total education curriculum that develops citizens of a global society.
- Recognize art is a necessity for the full development of better quality of life for all.
- Direct attention to the value of art education for divergent and critical thinking.
- Expand art programs in schools and stimulate new art programs.
- Encourage commitment to the arts by students, community organizations, and individuals everywhere.
- Provide additional opportunities for individuals of all ages to participate in creative art learning.
- Increase community, business and governmental support for art education.
- Increase community understanding and interest in art and art education through involvement in art exhibits, workshops, and other creative ventures.
- Reflect and demonstrate the goals of the National Art Education Association that work toward the improvement of art education at all levels.

Visit councilforarteducation.org for more information

GOAL D. INCREASE RELEVANCY AND ACCESS TO ARTS AND CULTURE FOR MULTIGENERATIONAL AUDIENCES

Objective D.1

Expand opportunities for youth to experience arts and culture.

Actions

Inventory regional arts and cultural offerings for youth.

- Identify underserved areas.
- Use information to make the case for grant funding.

Work with local organizations and school administrations to bring artist in residency programming to regional schools.

Develop volunteer opportunities for High School students at local cultural organizations.

Encourage youth art displays and exhibitions in the community.

Build recognition of youth performers and artists by celebrating achievements.

- Partner with local media outlets to raise the visibility of youth accomplishments.

Initiate conversations with schools about the value of offering foreign exchange student programs.

Collaborate through Region Two School of Applied Technology, to bring arts based education to a wider audience.

Continued on next page...



Photo Credit: Oakfield Railroad Museum, for more information, visit: www.oakfieldmuseum.org

GOAL D. INCREASE RELEVANCY AND ACCESS TO ARTS AND CULTURE FOR MULTIGENERATIONAL AUDIENCES

Objective D.2

Develop methods to increase participation in arts and cultural offerings.

Actions

Create an inventory of venues and spaces that may accommodate cultural activities including city owned, non-profit, places of worship, commercial, and school based settings.

Evaluate multiple outlets for new and existing offerings.

Make equal opportunity a primary goal in program development in order to reach diverse audiences.

→ Explore the dynamics of geographic, age, economic, and ethnic demographics.

Develop effective programming strategies based on community interests indicated by the public opinion survey results.

Employ regional targeted marketing based on the public opinion survey demographics.

Expand audiences through coordinated cross-sector promotion and event scheduling.

→ Use signature events to promote upcoming opportunities.

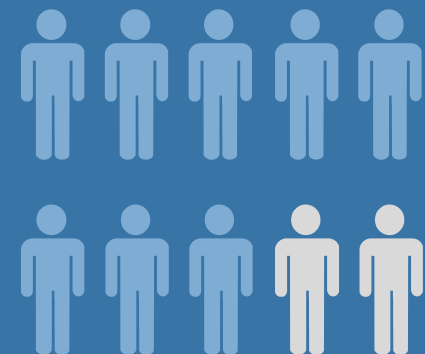
→ Encourage coordinated scheduling of events to increase participation.

Explore hosting outdoor movies in downtown parks or other community venues.

Identify a point person in municipal offices to ensure communication and processes are clear for regional cultural development initiatives.

Close to half identified
cost & driving distance as
factors that prevent them
from participating in
offerings as often as they
would like

At least 8 out of 10 respondents
show a high interest in both live
music/concerts & outdoor events



IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation Grid Key:

ST = Short Term I - 2 years

LT = Long Term 3 - 5 years

ACT = Aroostook County Tourism

FNQG = Friends and Needles Quilt Guild

GEGLCC = Greater East Grand Lake Area Chamber of Commerce

GHCC = Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce

HCACC = Houlton Community Arts Center Council

HCD = Houlton Community/Economic Development Department

MDOT = Maine Department of Transportation

NMDC = Northern Maine Development Commission

Partner Organizations = Galleries, Museums, Performance Venues, Studios, etc.

RCC = Regional Creative Council

R2 = Region Two School of Applied Technology

SADC = Southern Aroostook Development Corporation



Photo Credit: Greater East Grand Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, for more information, visit: www.facebook.com/EastGrandLakeChamber/

Goal A. Raise the visibility of cultural and natural assets in the Tri-County Region

OBJECTIVE A.1 UTILIZE EFFECTIVE MARKETING AND PROMOTION TO BOOST LOCAL ENGAGEMENT AND TOURISM

Strategies	Actions	Priority	Key Players
Work with Aroostook County Tourism (ACT) in creation of a regional asset map	Inventory arts, cultural, and historic assets Encourage regional websites to provide links to the online asset map	ST	RCC, ACT, HCD, GEGLCC, GHCC
Enhance regional customer service aimed at connecting visitors with quality experiences	Utilize the Welcome ME! training program provided through the Maine Office of Economic and Community Development	LT	RCC, GHCC, GEGLCC, ACT
Establish a Regional Creative Council (RCC) networking group comprised of representatives from arts, cultural, historical, recreational, and business organizations	Meet regularly to build trust and collaborative promotion efforts Establish an e-newsletter featuring regional cultural offerings Create a website for the Regional Creative Council; develop an online regional comprehensive calendar of cultural offerings and events Encourage stakeholders to make use of the MTA and MDOT online event calendars Establish Pecha Kucha gatherings to showcase creative and cultural organizations and individuals; http://www.pechakucha.org/	ST	RCC, Partner Organizations
Establish funding for a RCC part time coordinator		LT	RCC
Create and distribute a tourism toolkit to area hospitality businesses	Include available brochures from regional assets	ST	RCC, GHCC, GEGLCC
Build capacity for marketing and promotion	Research and pursue marketing grants Pool resources with partner organizations to build a revenue stream for collaborative marketing Utilize online tools to collect donations Establish an annual appeal	ST	RCC, Partner Organizations
Explore options for creating a printed map and guide of regional arts, cultural, historic, and natural features	Distribute through Maine Tourism Association Visitor Information Centers, local chambers and other visitor centers Provide advertising space to help pay for costs	LT	RCC, ACT, SADC
Explore working with Maine Trail Finder to raise the visibility of Tri-County Region public trails		LT	RCC, ACT
Work with Maine D.O.T. categorical signs program to develop signage to identify historic sites and public trails		LT	RCC, ACT, SADC, MDOT
Ensure the cultural sector participates in planning initiatives for the Katahdin Woods and Water National Monument; invite Katahdin Woods and Water National Monument representatives to regional planning forums		ST	RCC



Photo Credit: Houlton High School Alumni Association, for more information, visit: www.houltonalumni.com

Goal B. Grow a robust creative economy that attracts and retains youth and young adults

OBJECTIVE B.1 DEVELOP TOOLS TO SUPPORT CREATIVE INITIATIVES AND INDIVIDUALS

Strategies	Actions	Priority	Key Players
Continue to facilitate programs that encourage innovation, such as the entrepreneur challenge		ST	HCD, SADC
Encourage regional businesses to make use of online tools including Google Places	Create a postcard outlining the benefits and steps to register with Google Places	ST	RCC, GHCC, GEGLCC, SADC
Work with local economic development groups to create a narrative on arts and culture for use in business attraction promotional materials	Target businesses compatible with agriculture such as, micro-breweries and farm-to-table restaurants	ST	RCC, SADC, GHCC, GEGLCC
Facilitate social media workshops for creative enterprises		LT	RCC, GHCC, GEGLCC, SADC
Establish RCC online tools and resources for creative enterprises	Establish an online directory of artists, crafters, and makers Create an inventory of empty commercial spaces appropriate for creative enterprises, make listings available online	LT	RCC, Partner Organizations
Work with property owners to consider leasing spaces for reduced or affordable rents for creative start-ups and pop-up shops	Look at successful models such as, 'Project Storefronts'	LT	RCC, SADC, HCD
Reinvigorate Southern Aroostook Community Arts Project	Explore establishing a regional School of Woods and Water Painters; establish and promote an annual show of paintings displayed in the region; and, consider booking shows at the State House and other prominent locations	LT	RCC, Partner Organizations

OBJECTIVE B.2 BOOST CAPACITY OF CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Strategies	Actions	Priority	Key Players
Encourage municipalities to adopt all or part of this document as an official town plan		ST	RCC, Municipalities
Encourage cultural organizations to develop and promote internship opportunities	Work with regional schools to help identify potential interns	LT	RCC, Partner Organizations, Schools
Raise public awareness of the value arts and culture have on quality of life and economic development, to help garner support	Develop a public relations/communication plan to tout social and economic benefits of art and cultural offerings Implement a system for collecting and publicizing audience testimonials on why arts and culture matter Participate in the Americans for the Arts, Arts and Economic Prosperity Studies	LT	RCC, Partner Organizations
Expand volunteerism by offering incentives		ST	RCC, Partner Organizations
Celebrate and build recognition for volunteers		ST	RCC, Partner Organizations



Artist: Jack Lilley, carved wooden bowl, for more information, visit:
www.northernmainewoodturners.com/member-galleries/marc-lilley/
Photo Credit: Henry Gartley, Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce, for more
information, visit: www.greaterhoulton.com

Goal C. Celebrate and preserve community history and traditions through creative public projects

OBJECTIVE C.1 SUPPORT EXISTING AND ENCOURAGE NEW PROJECTS THAT PROMOTE RURAL PLACEMAKING

Strategies		Actions	Priority	Key Players
Establish a historic placemaking committee comprised of stakeholders, in order to develop a plan for implementing and funding projects			LT	RCC, Partner Organizations
Connect the rural landscape with innovative tours and itineraries featuring cultural attractions and landmarks		Look at successful models such as Maine High Peaks Arts and Heritage Loop Promote local heritage trails	LT	RCC, Partner Organizations
Boost the Northern Maine Quilt Barn Trail		Explore collaborating with Friends and Needles Quilt Guild to build opportunities to help support expansion of the trail and to create a map guide of the Northern Maine Quilt Barn Trail	ST	RCC, FNQG
Develop temporary historic exhibitions in downtowns		Investigate reproducing historic photographs of lumbering history, agricultural history, and community life onto large scale banners for exterior and interior displays	LT	RCC, Historical Societies, Municipalities
Collaborate to develop a regional history tour app that enables users to participate in self-guided tours			LT	RCC, Historical Societies
Encourage communities to explore options for establishing 'Museum in the Streets'		Follow guidance provided through the Museum in the Streets website (http://www.themuseuminthestreets.com/)	LT	RCC, Historical Societies, Municipalities
Encourage Native Americans to share their history and current realities through the arts			LT	RCC, Tribal Nations
Explore the feasibility of expanding historical attractions at scenic gateways and scenic byway turnouts			LT	RCC, Scenic Byway Committees, MDOT



Photo Credit: Henry Gartley, Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce, for more information, visit: www.greaterhoulton.com

Goal D. Increase relevancy and access to arts and culture for multigenerational audiences

OBJECTIVE D.1 EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO EXPERIENCE ARTS AND CULTURE

Strategies	Actions	Priority	Key Players
Inventory regional arts and cultural offerings for youth	Identify underserved areas Use information to make the case for grant funding	ST	RCC, Schools
Work with local organizations and school administrations to bring artist in residency programming to regional schools		LT	RCC, Schools, HCACC
Develop volunteer opportunities for High School students at local cultural organizations		ST	RCC, Partner Organizations
Encourage youth art displays and exhibitions in the community		LT	RCC, Partner Organizations
Build recognition of youth performers and artists by celebrating achievements	Partner with local media outlets to raise the visibility of youth accomplishments	ST	RCC, Schools, Media
Initiate conversations with schools on the value of offering foreign exchange student programs		LT	Schools, RCC
Collaborate through Region Two School of Applied Technology, to bring arts based education to a wider audience		LT	RCC, R2

OBJECTIVE D.2 DEVELOP METHODS TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN ARTS AND CULTURAL OFFERINGS

Strategies	Actions	Priority	Key Players
Create an inventory of venues and spaces that may accommodate cultural activities including city owned, non-profit, places of worship, commercial, and school based settings		LT	RCC, HCD, SADC, Partner Organizations
Evaluate multiple outlets for new and existing offerings		LT	RCC, Partner Organizations
Make equal opportunity a primary goal in program development in order to reach diverse audiences.	Explore the dynamics of geographic, age, economic, and ethnic demographics	ST	RCC, Partner Organizations
Develop effective programming strategies based on community interests indicated by the public opinion survey results		ST	RCC, Partner Organizations
Employ regional targeted marketing based on the public opinion survey demographics		ST	RCC, Partner Organizations
Expand audiences through coordinated cross-sector promotion and event scheduling	Use signature events to promote upcoming opportunities Encourage coordinated scheduling of events to increase participation	ST	RCC, Partner Organizations, GHCC, GEGGCC
Explore hosting outdoor movies in downtown parks or other community venues		LT	RCC, Municipal Parks Departments
Identify a point person in municipal offices to ensure communication and processes are clear for regional cultural development initiatives		ST	RCC, Municipalities



Photo Credit: Henry Gartley, Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce, for more information, visit: www.greaterhoulton.com