

# Recreational Lodging Initiative

## Informational Sheet: Part 1 – General Summary and Guide

Over the past two years the Maine Land Use Planning Commission (Commission) worked with recreational lodging facility owners and other stakeholders to understand changing market demands for recreational lodging services and identify ways in which the Commission’s regulatory structure could be improved to match these changes. Based on stakeholder feedback, ideas, and concerns the Commission adopted rule revisions that address a majority of the issues identified.

This document, one of four in a series, summarizes the rule revisions for recreational lodging in the unorganized territories of Maine.

### What the revisions are intended to accomplish

#### 1. Maximize flexibility

- Categorize uses based on impact rather than specific labels like “campground” or “sporting camp.” Historically, how a facility was labeled was significant because the label influenced where a facility could be located. Determining how to label a facility was not always straight forward, especially when a facility was put to multiple uses. Impact-based regulation provides flexibility for facilities to adapt to market changes and offer multiple services at any one time or during different seasons, without worrying how they are labeled.
- Establish five categories (levels) of lodging facilities – ranging from low impact facilities (*e.g., a small campground or cabin*), to a higher impact facilities (*e.g., resort or lodging complex; specifically, Levels A through E*).
- Provide facility owners with options so they may elect to increase their facility’s size or the services they offer, referred to in the rules as facility adjustments, by meeting certain standards.
- Allow recreational lodging facilities in a wider range of areas (rezonings should be necessary less often), and increase the rezoning options for current and future lodging businesses through the creation of two new recreational lodging-specific subdistricts (zones).

#### 2. Improve predictability

- Provide business owners and the public a better understanding of where different activities and facilities are allowed, particularly multi-use facilities that have been more challenging to define in the past.
- Incorporate existing policies and practices into rule so that the expectations for prospective applicants are clear (*e.g., how to: measure square footage limits, handle conversion of recreational lodging to another use, and evaluate what constitutes “transient occupancy” in a campsite or campground*).

#### 3. Support Maine’s recreational lodging industry

- Increase existing limits to allow facilities to respond to changing market demands.
- Allow traditional and new types of recreation facilities that are consistent with jurisdiction values, economic needs, and traditional uses.
- Allow lodging facilities in more locations where other commercial development may not be appropriate.

#### 4. Respect traditional uses

- Retain existing: i) reconstruction rights for legally existing, nonconforming structures within a commercial sporting camp; and ii) attention to existing sporting camps when reviewing nearby development proposals.
- Protect commercial sporting camp brand from dilution by allowing other recreational uses to be located appropriately without having to awkwardly categorize these other uses as sporting camps.

In balancing flexibility, predictability, and appropriate resource protections, the categorization system was found to be the simplest way to achieve all three goals.

## Section-specific Overview of Changes to Chapter 10

The following is a section-by-section overview of the changes to the Commission's Land Use Districts and Standards. This list does not capture every change and is intended only as a brief summary of the revisions.

- **Section 10.02 Definitions** – amended to clarify existing terms and add new definitions for terms that result from the categorization system.
- **Section 10.11,C Nonconforming Structures** – amended to clarify standards regarding how nonconforming structures within a commercial sporting camp can be reconfigured, and how outpost cabins are considered part of a commercial sporting camp, while retaining the ability for legally existing, nonconforming structures within a commercial sporting camp to be reconstructed in place.
- **Section 10.21 – 10.23 Development, Management, and Protection Subdistricts** –
  1. Revises use listings that implement the categorization system (e.g., “Recreational lodging facilities: Level C”).
  2. Adds two new subdistrict options. While the traditional subdistricts accommodate a range of facility levels, some sites would need to be rezoned in order to be developed with a recreational lodging facility. Two new subdistricts address common issues specific to rezoning for a recreational lodging facility and will make these types of rezonings more straightforward in those areas suitable for accommodating recreational lodging.
- **Section 10.26,A, D, and G Dimensional Requirements** – amended to incorporate the lodging categories within existing dimensional requirements.
- **Section 10.27,Q Recreational Lodging Facilities** – a new set of activity-specific standards:
  1. Recreational lodging categories – categorizes recreational lodging facilities into one of five different facility levels, based on impacts. (*Factors considered in evaluation of impact include: on-site recreation features, retail space, utilities, floor area, footprint of clearing near a waterbody, overnight occupancy, and the availability of dining amenities, fuel, and recreation services to the general public*).
  2. Facility adjustments – adds tools to adjust what a facility can include and how or where a facility is allowed in order to provide an additional layer of flexibility.
  3. Geographic allowance areas – provides, at a broad and general scale, a mechanism to allow more services or moderately intense facilities in locations that are especially appropriate for the subsequent increased traffic and demand for services.
  4. Clarifies existing policies – incorporates into the revised rule existing policies regarding:
    - how to measure square footage limits;
    - if and how RVs can be modified and stored at campgrounds; and
    - if and how a recreational lodging facility may convert to another use.
  5. Water-dependent structures – allows facilities to include small structures near waterbodies for equipment or safety, with limitations on use, size, and location, as well as requirements for screening.

### For more information:

- [www.maine.gov/dacf/lupc/projects/recreational\\_lodging/recreational\\_lodging.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/lupc/projects/recreational_lodging/recreational_lodging.shtml)
- contact the LUPC office that serves your area: **Ashland Office** – (207) 435-7963; **Downeast Office** – (207) 941-4052; **East Millinocket Office** – (207) 746-2244; **Greenville Office** – (207) 695-2466; **Rangeley Office** – (207) 670-7493; **Augusta Office** – (207) 287-2631; or
- contact Tim Beaucage at (207) 287-4894 or [timothy.beaucage@maine.gov](mailto:timothy.beaucage@maine.gov)