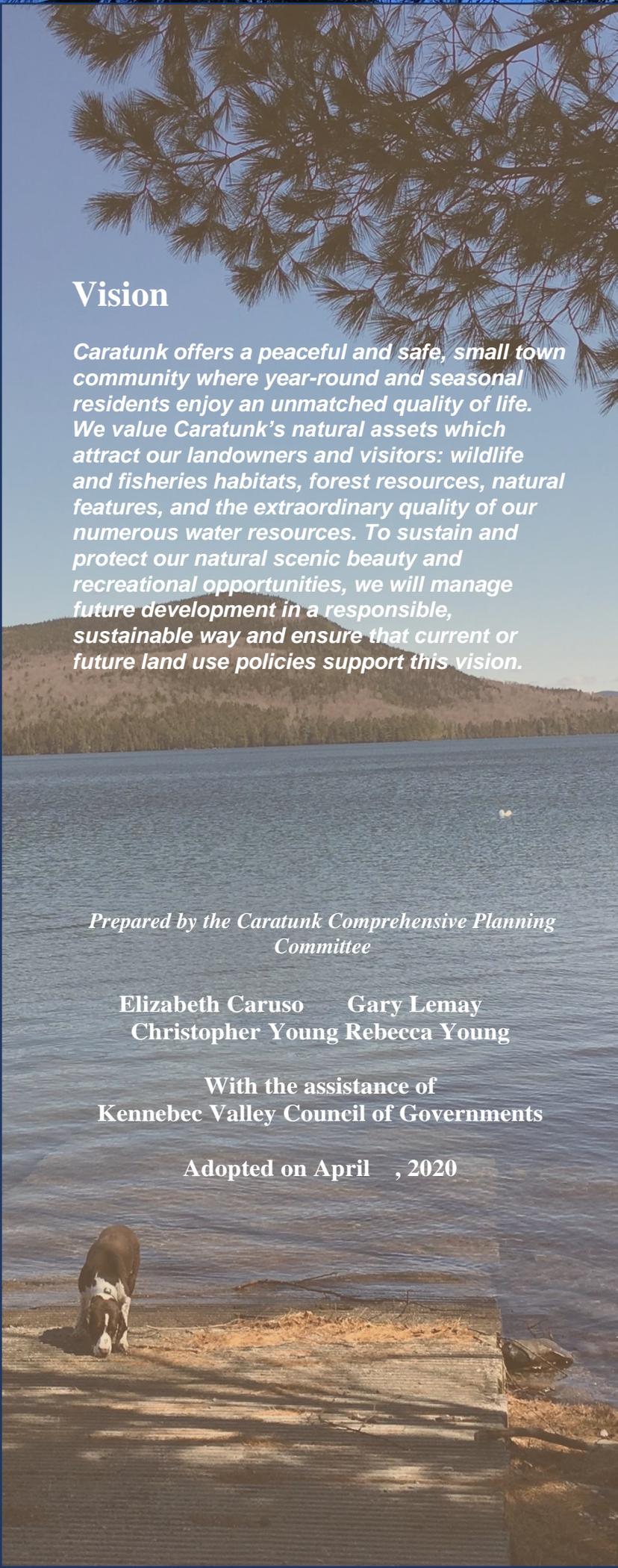


Caratunk

2020 Comprehensive Plan
Adopted: April , 2020



Vision

Caratunk offers a peaceful and safe, small town community where year-round and seasonal residents enjoy an unmatched quality of life. We value Caratunk's natural assets which attract our landowners and visitors: wildlife and fisheries habitats, forest resources, natural features, and the extraordinary quality of our numerous water resources. To sustain and protect our natural scenic beauty and recreational opportunities, we will manage future development in a responsible, sustainable way and ensure that current or future land use policies support this vision.

Prepared by the Caratunk Comprehensive Planning Committee

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Christopher Young Rebecca Young**

**With the assistance of
Kennebec Valley Council of Governments**

Adopted on April , 2020



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Vision Statement

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Public Participation Summary

In compliance with 30-A MRSA Sect.4324, the Vision Statement as well as analyses, policies and strategies were guided by input received from year-round residents and seasonal residents.

An analysis of who we are would be incomplete if we did not include the viewpoints of the community on a number of issues Caratunk faces. To that end, a Community Survey was conducted online and on paper during January, 2020. Fifty-five people responded to the survey. 27.78% of respondents were residents, 61.11% were nonresidents and 12.96% were either frequent or day visitors. Survey results are incorporated throughout this 2020 Comprehensive Plan, and the entire survey is located in Appendix J. The responses will be referenced throughout this document and will assist the committee to prioritize next steps in establishing goals and objectives for Caratunk's future.

Additionally, the public was invited to participate in committee meetings which were posted.

1 History and Archaeological Resources

Early Settlement

Caratunk is situated within the northern boundaries of William Bingham's Kennebec Purchase. Although Caratunk was settled about 1810, most settlers did not actually purchase their lands from the Bingham Heirs until the 1830's.

Land was being cleared and settlement occurred in Caratunk sometime around 1810. Farmland was the major lure. However, many families were supported by the logging industry as well. Joseph Spaulding, who built and operated a hotel in Caratunk as early as 1816, also had several logging interests in town including a sawmill on Pleasant Pond as early as 1821.

Caratunk was incorporated in 1840. The first town meeting was held on October 20, 1840 at the home of Joseph Spaulding. Voters gathered to organize the plantation. The town got its name from the Indian word "Carriontonka", which means "rough and broken". It is not known exactly when the town took its name, but appears to be sometime around 1850.

Carrying Place Plantation was considered part of Caratunk until July 20, 1870 when it organized as a separate plantation. Until that time Carrying Place residents took part in Caratunk's town affairs and were counted in the census figures for Caratunk. See the dip in Figure 1 (page 2) in 1880 when the Plantations split.

Growth and development increased steadily from 1820 until it peaked in the early 1900's. The town's first school was built about 1830 and until the 1850's town meetings were held in this house of learning. During the early years of Caratunk, no town center existed and the town's population was spread quite widely. At one time, six schools were located within the borders of Caratunk to accommodate the needs of the town's school children. The Spaulding/Clark Hotel served as the town post office until 1897, when the post office was moved to the Caratunk General Store. The town's only church was built in 1888 at a cost of \$300.00.

As for commercial development, the town of Caratunk had a variety of business operations, including two known saw/grist mills, an axe factory, two hotels, boarding homes, general stores, and blacksmith shops.

Post Civil War Era

The population decreased only slightly from 1860 to 1870. Commercial development saw its greatest increase after the Civil War. The Witham Axe Factory was built, as were a variety of stores, and another hotel business was initiated on the shores of Pleasant Pond.

The population of Caratunk peaked in the early 1900's. In 1900, the town's population was listed at 218, but by 1940 that census figure had decreased to 133. This decline was at least partly hastened by the construction of Wyman Dam, which flooded many Caratunk farms along the Kennebec River.

The population decline brought with it a slowing of commercial development. There was a slight increase just prior to WWI, and Caratunk became a popular tourist spot during the 1920's and 1930's. At this time several businesses catering to the "sports" were established, namely Whoriff's Stage House, Comber's Housekeeping Cabins, and Mace's West Beach Camps.

The Caratunk Fire Department was formed just prior to 1940. The Caratunk Elementary School was completed in 1948 and closed in 2003.

Rationing during WWII had an impact on Caratunk's economy. Because they could not get the goods to operate their businesses, several operations catering to tourists saw hard times or completely closed their doors.

Recent Developments

By the late 1960's the only operating businesses in Caratunk were Comber's Camps, Ryder's Camps, the Caratunk General Store, the Sterling Hotel, York's Sawmill, Berry's Painters and Decorators, Hall's Boat Landing and Campground, and the Caratunk Snowshoe Company.

The Plantation of Caratunk became a town on December 5, 1977, largely through the efforts of veteran selectman Walter E. York.

Today, the business climate has changed. From many establishments serving local residents and long-term vacationers, we have changed to a few businesses and many home workers. Caratunk is still a popular vacation spot, both for summer camp residents and short term rafters and hikers.

Artifacts

As of October, 2019, the following property is currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places:
Arnold Trail to Quebec Historic District

Although Indians may have camped on the banks of the Kennebec River and Pleasant Pond on their travels through Caratunk to Moosehead Lake, there are no identified Indian encampments in Caratunk. Most of the original bank of the Kennebec was inundated by Wyman Dam.

Local historians have a fairly good idea and documentation of old cellar holes and other evidence of early settlement history. At this time, no action has been taken to preserve these artifacts. The following table was compiled by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission in November, 2019.

| SiteName | Sitenum | SiteType | Periods of Significance | NationalRegisterStatus |
|--|------------|----------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Caratunk School # 1 | ME 077-001 | School | c 1817 to c 1955 | undetermined |
| Spaulding Inn | ME 077-002 | hotel | 1816 to present | undetermined |
| Kennedy & Witham Smithy & House | ME 077-003 | workshop, blacksmith | c. 1840 to c. 1883 | undetermined |
| Witham Axe Factory | ME 077-004 | industrial, axe factory | c. 1865 to 1938 | undetermined |
| Witham Ferry | ME 077-005 | ferry crossing | c. 1883 to c. 1920 | undetermined |
| Mill House | ME 077-006 | domestic | c. 1826 to 1849, and then to present | undetermined |
| Caratunk Mill | ME 077-007 | mill, shingle | c. 1840 to c. 1930 | undetermined |
| Old Caratunk Bridges | ME 077-008 | bridge | c. 1840 to c. 1930 | undetermined |
| New Caratunk Bridge | ME 077-009 | bridge | c. 1830 to present | undetermined |
| Cattle Drover's Trail & New Canada Road | ME 077-010 | road | c. 1802 to present | undetermined |
| Vigue Farm | ME 077-011 | farmstead | c. 1839 to c. 1930 | undetermined |

| SiteName | Sitenum | SiteType | Periods of Significance | NationalRegisterStatus |
|------------------------|------------|-----------|---|------------------------|
| Sterling-Steward Farm | ME 077-012 | farmstead | c. 1840 to c. 1940 | undetermined |
| E. G. Pierce homestead | ME 077-013 | domestic | exact dates unknown, shown on 1883 map. | |

A partial listing of structural history is as follows:

The Spaulding Hotel built about 1816 and now the Sterling Inn.

The village sawmill built about 1840. The remaining sections are privately owned.

The village school house built during the 1870's. It is now a private home.

The Caratunk Congregational Church built in 1888. It is now maintained privately and is no longer used except for special occasions.

The town's two cemeteries, the Webster Cemetery and the Moore Family Cemetery, are the town's only known burial grounds.

In conjunction with the town's sesquicentennial in 1990, a local history was compiled and historic homes in the village were researched. A majority of the village homes now display plaques with dates more than a hundred years past. Maintenance of these plaques is the homeowners' responsibility.

2 Water Resources

The Town of Caratunk covers approximately 53 square miles of land area. Included within our boundaries are some of the best river and pond frontage in Maine, and outstanding forest and mountain areas as well. The natural resources of Caratunk act as both an opportunity and a constraint to planning and development. Most of us live here because of our high environmental quality demonstrated by our daily work and recreational pursuits. To some extent, our livelihood and lifestyles depend on the quality of the natural resources around us.

There are no point or non-point sources of pollution. Our Land Use Ordinance requires all development to minimize storm water runoff in excess of the natural predevelopment conditions. (Land Use Ordinance, p65)

The issue we face is whether future development of even management of the existing resources will result in a deterioration of these resources. Development could mean impacts on water supplies, lake water quality and the scenic and recreational assets that comprise a good portion of our local economy. Some parts of town will be more suitable for development than others, and some forms of development have more potential impacts than others. We need to plan for building or development that will complement rather than disturb our natural resources, with a minimum of disruption to private property rights. Furthermore, the only current concern is limiting the use of road salt so as not to pollute Pleasant Pond Stream or Pleasant Pond.

Groundwater and surface water supplies are protected by Stream and Resource Protection Districts. Public Works and building contractors are required to use Best Management Practices in their operations. Caratunk's sand/salt is jointly housed in a covered Quonset Hut at the W Forks DOT site (with the MeDOT's, Somerset County's and The Forks').

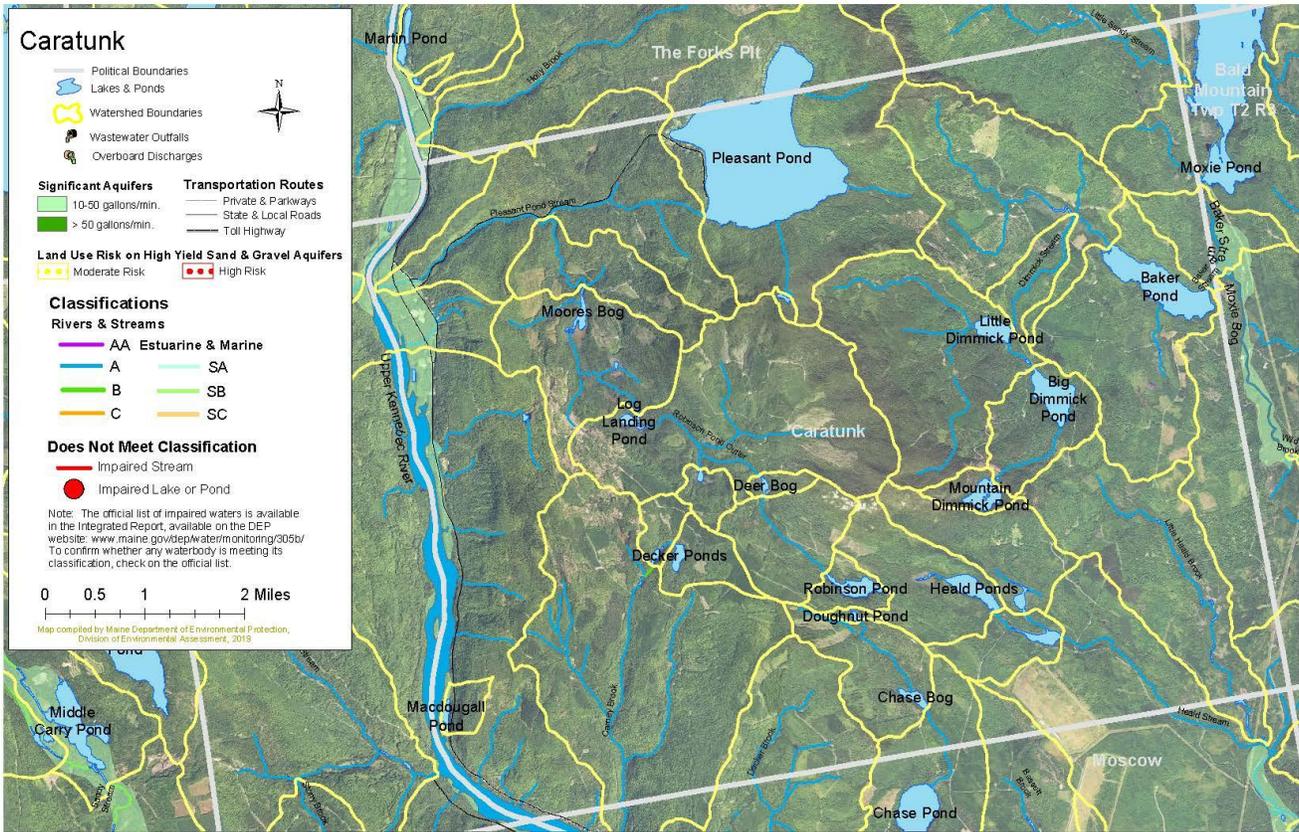
This chapter contains information on our water and land-based resources, including how they benefit us, and how we use them.

For more information on Caratunk's Water Resources, please see **Appendix D: Primary Map 1, Water Resources and Riparian Habitats**.

Surface Waters

The surface waters in Caratunk are some of the Town's greatest assets. They are, for the most part, undeveloped, possess excellent water quality, and serve as important habitat for fish and wildlife. Larger wetlands, streams, and ponds are protected locally through Shoreland Zoning in which certain activities are restricted in a 250 foot area adjacent to the water body. Caratunk's current Land Use Ordinance protects water resources from pollution and maintains/improves water quality while allowing development and growth where possible. The Pleasant Pond Association is active and recently helped initiate the removal of culverts on the West Shore Road that presented runoff problems.

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Caratunk's surface waters include many pristine ponds, some smaller streams, and the Kennebec River. The ponds are, by name: Baker, Big Dimmick, Chase Bog, Chase, Decker Pond (1), Decker Pond (2), Deer Bog, Doughnut, Heald Ponds, Little Dimmick, Little Heald, Log Landing, Macdougall, Mountain Dimmick, Moxie, Pleasant, Robinson, Sunday, and Wyman Lake. The streams include Carney Brook, Dimmick Stream, Heald Stream, Little Heald Brook, Little Sandy Stream, Pleasant Pond Stream, and some smaller, unnamed flowages. A map of the water bodies and their watersheds is included at the end of this report.

A majority of these waters are undeveloped with few seasonal buildings on Baker Pond and Heald Pond and multiple buildings on Pleasant Pond and Wyman Lake. Pleasant Pond and Pleasant Pond Stream are the only water bodies abutting year-round residences (except for the Kennebec River).

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection's 2016 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report Appendix II, Rivers and Streams has provided the following information. The report can be accessed here: https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/monitoring/305b/2016/28-Feb-2018_2016-ME-IntegratedRptLIST.pdf

Furthermore, **“there are no impaired waters, and no TMDLs, for either rivers or lakes in Caratunk”** according to the leaders of the *Lakes Assessment Section*, Linda Bacon, and *Rivers Assessment Section*, Susanne Meidel, *Water Quality Standards Coordinator in the Bureau of Water Quality*.

As reflected in the following data tables, Caratunk water bodies are listed as Category 1 and 2 which designate no impairments.

| Category 1: Lake Waters Fully Attaining All Designated Uses | | |
|--|------------------|--------------|
| <u>Hydrologic Unit Name</u> | <u>Sq. Miles</u> | <u>Acres</u> |
| Kennebec River (2) above The Forks | 323.12 | 6404 |
| Kennebec River (4) at Wyman Dam | 158.85 | 2344 |
| Austin Stream | 89.87 | 297 |

**Category 2: Rivers and Streams Attaining Some Designated Uses
Insufficient Information for Other Uses**

| ADB Assessment Unit ID | Segment Name | Location | Segment Size (miles) | Segment Class | Comments |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|--|
| ME0103000301_312R | Minor tributaries Kennebec R | Between Dead River and Wyman Dam | 80.26 | Class A | |
| ME0103000302_312R | Austin Stream and tributaries | Tributaries to Kennebec River | 170.8 | Class A | 10/11/2016: Newly mapped in 2016 cycle, corrected length from 75.68 to 170.80 miles. |
| ME0103000312_336R | Kennebec R | Main stem, from Dead R to Wyman Dam | 21.53 | Class A | 10/11/2016: Newly mapped in 2016 cycle, corrected length from 24.86 to 21.53 miles. |

| Caratunk Lakes and Ponds | | |
|--|-----------|--------------|
| <i>Category 2 ponds with no known impairments</i> | | |
| <u>LAKE</u> | <u>ID</u> | <u>ACRES</u> |
| BAKER Pond | 242 | 186 |
| DIMMICK Pond (BIG) | 236 | 90 |
| DIMMICK Pond (LITTLE) | 240 | 41 |
| DIMMICK P MOUNTAIN) | 238 | 50 |
| DECKER Pond #1 | 232 | 7 |
| DECKER Pond #2 | 230 | 13 |
| DEER BOG | 216 | 7 |
| DOUGHNUT Pond | 226 | 4 |
| LOG LANDING Pond | 214 | 16 |
| MACDOUGALL Pond | 403 | 8 |
| MOORES BOG | 212 | 17 |
| PLEASANT Pond | 224 | 1120 |
| ROBINSON Pond | 220 | 40 |
| SUNDAY Pond | 218 | 5 |
| CHASE BOG | 228 | 18 |
| HEALD Pond | 234 | 31 |
| HEALD Pond (LITTLE) | 9909 | 26 |

Although Pleasant Pond has high quality water, there are a couple of factors that should serve as warning signs for future development or timber cutting. The Pond is surrounded by a watershed with steep slopes and it has a very slow flushing rate (0.10 flushes per year). The steep slopes can deliver polluting runoff from roads and soil-disturbing activities in faster rates and greater volumes than a pond surrounded by gentler slopes. And the slow flushing rate does not allow the Pond to circulate and get rid of pollutants from runoff or malfunctioning septic systems in a timely manner. Currently there is not enough activity in Pleasant Pond's watershed to pose a problem, but the Town may want to take measures that will ensure the Pond's excellent water quality for years to come.

Pleasant Pond Protective Association: Clarity testing, Dam Management, Boat Inspections

The Objective of the Pleasant Pond Protective Association (PPPA) is to assist in the maintenance of scenic beauty of Pleasant Pond and its vicinity; to further the improvement of hunting and fishing in the pond and its environs and to prevent the water pollution. Some of the PPPA's efforts include working with state and other agencies to monitor the clarity and quality of the pond. Clarity testing takes place throughout the summer season twice monthly and is recorded and sent to the Lake Stewart of Maine (formerly the VLMP) to be recorded and compared. Average Secchi Dick Transparencies (SDT) in 2018 was 14.4 meters with a maximum reading of 15.7 meters.

The PPPA monitors/manages pond levels through the seasons and maintains the dam while protecting downstream environments. PPPA leases and maintains a boat ramp and dock for public and private use to access the pond. All vessels entering the pond are inspected for any invasive aquatic plants and pollutants. Committees produce or pass on information to landowners and people using the pond in an attempt to maintain and protect water quality from present or future threats.

Generally, by having the PPPA in place, its value goes beyond just maintaining the beauty of such a special place; it also protects the land values for the town and its property owners. The Town partners with the PPPA by donating each year to the organization.

Pleasant Pond usually ranks in the top three in the state for clarity and since 2013 has ranked number one. Jordan Pond in Acadia National Park is very close, however, the latter has two advantages the Pleasant Pond does not: it is in a national park with no residential homes, and it has limited motorized boat traffic (<10hp).

Groundwater

Caratunk has two locations overlying sand and gravel aquifers which would potentially yield enough water for residential, commercial, or industrial uses: an area almost entirely west of Route 201 following from The Forks/Caratunk town line south about halfway through town; and an area directly surrounding MacDougal Pond. These aquifers are illustrated on the Significant Sand and Gravel Aquifers, Caratunk Quadrangle, 2001, Appendix I.

It is unlikely that the Town will be tapping into these aquifers for a public water system anytime soon, but it could be a source of water for other users in the future. Another important function of Caratunk's aquifers is that they are hydro-logically linked to the Kennebec River and could be a source of pollution to the river if the aquifers themselves are contaminated.

Protecting the quality of water in these aquifers is obviously important. The groundwater contained within them could be contaminated by a number of sources such as sand and gravel mining, underground storage tanks, and a variety of commercial/industrial activities. The former saw mill location, now occupied by Adventure Bound, does have at least one underground storage tank, but there is no indication presently of any problems. It would be wise for the Town to consider the location of these sand and gravel aquifers in any future development review.

3 Natural Resources

It is the Town's goal to protect critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shore lands, scenic vistas and unique natural areas. Much of Caratunk's Land Use Zoning Map (Appendix C) has been divided into designations for which the primary goal is to protect the aforementioned resources. Caratunk's Land Use Ordinance, Wind Use Ordinance and the future Energy Systems Ordinance have been focused on protecting resources, wildlife, fisheries, shorelands and scenic vistas as these are also the focus of Caratunk landowners.

To date, none of the critical natural resources are threatened by development, overuse or other activities with the exception of the proposed New England Clean Energy Connect transmission corridor.

The Land Use Ordinance (2012) was structured to be in compliance with Maine's shoreland zone standards and state guidelines.

Wetlands

Wetlands in Caratunk serve a number of important functions. They offer key habitat to deer and other mammals, amphibians, unique plants, and many species of waterfowl and fish. Wetlands act like sponges during times of high water and heavy precipitation to prevent flooding on adjacent lands (or residential properties). They also protect surface and ground water by trapping silt and other pollutants from road run-off, timber harvesting, or any type of development that disturbs the soil or creates impermeable surfaces. This pollutant-trapping function is particularly important in aquifer recharge areas.

The wetlands associated with the Kennebec and other streams and ponds are regulated through the town's Land Use Ordinance (including Shoreland Zoning) and Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act. Any activity proposed on or adjacent to these wetlands requires a permit through the Town and may require one from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Other wetlands in Caratunk may be regulated through the Natural Resources Protection Act depending on the size and type of alteration. It is worth noting that the wetlands left unregulated by Shoreland Zoning can be altered in the future even though they may be serving an important function such as wildlife habitat or flood retention.

Wetland locations are shown on the **Wetland Characterization, Supplementary Map 7 in Appendix F**.

Wildlife Resources

The variety of upland, pond and wetland habitat in Caratunk contributes to a rich array of wildlife. In summary, the Beginning With Habitat (BWH)'s **Natural Resource Co-Occurrence Map (Appendix E)** represents the concentration of selected environmental asset data layers overlaid on the landscape and is a summary of Primary Maps 1,2, and 3.

The **High Value Plant and Animal Habitats, Primary Map 2 (Appendix G)** depicts elements of our Wildlife resources that need special attention. Some habitat features are regulated by the State of Maine through the Maine Endangered Species Act (Essential Habitats and threatened and endangered species occurrences) and Natural Resources Protection Act (Significant Wildlife Habitat). Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife deems "Essential" wildlife habitat and "Significant" wildlife habitat. "Essential" habitat possesses features that are essential to the conservation of endangered and threatened species such as the Bald Eagle.

Rare, Threatened or Endangered Wildlife

- Northern Spring Salamander, *Species of Special Concern*, east of Route 201 and at Carney Brook

outlet

- Bald Eagle, *Species of Special Concern* (Kennebec River/Route 201)

Rare or Exemplary Plants and Natural Communities

- Clinton's Bulrush, *Species of Special Concern*
- Circumneutral Outcrop, *Natural Community*
- White Cedar Woodland, *Natural Community*
- Red and White Pine, *Forest Natural Community*

There are a few types of "**Significant**" wildlife habitat, such as moderate and high value **Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat (WWH) and Deer Wintering Areas (DWA's)**, found within Caratunk's borders. Moderate and high value WWH's are wetlands that provide excellent cover for breeding, feeding, wintering, and migrating waterfowl and wading birds. These can be found adjacent to Robinson Pond Outlet, Moores Bog, Log Landing Pond, adjacent to and west of Decker Ponds, Robinson Pond Outlet, Deer Bog, Doughnut Pond, Robinson Pond, Heald Ponds, northwest of Baker Pond, and upper Little Heald Brook. Chase Bog is another candidate for a moderate or high value WWH, but its classification has not been determined yet. These are nearly all remote locations with little or no chance of significant disturbance.

The State has record of Deer Wintering Areas in Caratunk from Moore's Bog to Deer Bog and along Robinson Pond Outlet. Deer Wintering Areas, or deer yards, are especially crucial habitat in Central and Northern Maine. This is near the northern limit for Whitetail deer and the availability of a good DWA is the difference between life and death for many deer. They provide shelter from deep snow and fatally cold winds. Currently there is one active logging road (also snowmobile trail) going through this deer yard. While logging or even development is not necessarily incompatible with DWA activities, there are ways to do it intelligently in order to preserve the resource. However, it should be noted that the real or current Deer Wintering Area is the Kennebec River valley along Route 201.

A wildlife area of special concern is located just across the river. Henhawk Ledge is directly on the shore of the Kennebec in Carrying Place Township and is considered an historic habitat for **Peregrine Falcon**. Effective enforcement of Caratunk's shoreland zoning ordinance and sensitivity to the amount and type of development along the river will keep habitat available for this rarely sighted bird of prey.

Conserving habitat for certain types of wildlife has importance beyond just preserving natural resources. It also has economic benefits for the region and the State. Maintaining deer and duck populations keep hunters returning every year to spend millions of dollars on licenses, food, lodging, gas, and other supplies. Viable wildlife populations of all sorts are valued by cash-spending tourists and Mainers alike, and they are a reminder that Maine is still a beautiful and pristine place.

Rare Plants and Unique Natural Areas

The Maine Natural Heritage Program has record of rare and endangered plants in Caratunk as well as Registered Critical Areas. The Registered Critical Areas are locations that landowners choose to voluntarily protect and to list with the state.

The rare plants in Caratunk include the New England Violet, Low Shadbush, and Sycamore. The New England Violet is somewhat rare in Maine and grows in gravelly or ledgy shores and in moist meadows. The Low Shadbush is extremely rare and not originally native to the State. It tends to grow in rocky or sandy shores or banks. The Sycamore occurred historically in Maine, but, as far as anyone knows, there are none currently growing. The last Sycamore seen in Caratunk was in 1948.

There are two Registered Critical Areas in Caratunk: Baker Pond Falls and the Caratunk Esker. Baker Pond Falls are at the mouth of Baker Pond and are valued because of their unique geology and scenic beauty.

Baker Pond Falls are one of 50 "significant" waterfalls in Maine and begin in a 13 foot gorge with a 16 foot drop over about a 50 foot course. The Caratunk Esker covers about 37 acres on Wyman Lake just south of the village. Also called "horsebacks" or "whalebacks", eskers are large, cigar-shaped gravel deposits left by the last glacier. The Caratunk Esker is one of the largest and best-formed eskers in the State and is very uncommonly double-ridged (each ridge is over 100 feet high).

Soils

Any land use activity is influenced by the soils that underlie it; whether it be residential development or a recreational site. Slope, depth to bedrock, presence of water, erosion, and the material content of the soil will determine the appropriateness of a site for a particular use. Wet soil with high clay content, for example, would not be suitable for a septic system.

With a good soil survey as the basis for a Town-wide soils map, we could have a general view of the sections of Town suitable for future development and the ones unsuitable for development. The only soil survey available for Caratunk, however, is a low intensity version available from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service). The scale is 1" = 1 mile and the soils are classified by multiple association groupings-- not much value for analysis in this plan. In the absence of a higher intensity soil survey, it probably makes the most sense to pick out the steep slopes on the Watersheds Map (shaded areas) and the wetlands in the Natural Resources Map as areas of unsuitable soils for development. Any site-specific analysis, of course, should be done by a soils specialist.

Scenic Areas

Caratunk has no shortage of locations of scenic beauty. The Kennebec River, extreme topography, undeveloped ponds, historic village, and western views of the Carrabassett Range make Caratunk one of the most scenic places in the Kennebec Valley. Development is mostly found in the village and the southern shore of Pleasant Pond, thus leaving the rest of Town in a mostly pristine, natural state. The comprehensive planning committee developed a list of scenic (as well as recreational and cultural) areas that are most valued in Town.

- Undeveloped parts of Pleasant Pond
- Undeveloped areas of Pleasant Pond Rd.
- The older homes
- Caratunk boat landing
- The Kennebec River
- Moore's Bog
- Robinson Pond
- Arnold Trail
- Moxie Mountain
- MacDougal Pond
- Appalachian Trail
- Cemeteries
- Pleasant Pond Mountain

4 Agricultural and Forest Resources

The goal of the Town is to protect agricultural resources from over-development or any development which threatens these resources.

Agriculture

Many of Caratunk's first citizens in the early and mid-1800s were small-scale farmers by necessity. They needed the locally raised meat, produce, and milk as their main source of food. Agriculture, however, was never a predominant economic activity in Caratunk; especially after Wyman dam flooded much of the flatter, river plain soils. Caratunk's topography, soils, distance to market, and low population combine to make farming a risky proposition at best. Even residents attempting to garden have battled sandy soil, bedrock, and unfriendly lay-of-land to meet the mountainous challenge of succeeding with a family garden. It is easy to see why there is no farming of any type in Town today.

Forestry

Forestry is the largest resource-related activity by far in Caratunk. Timber harvesting and related activities fall under the Department of Conservation. Industrial forest land comprises close to 90% of the acreage in town and supplies much of the tax base and some of the employment upon which we depend. Merchantable timber and pulpwood help support woods operations and landowners like Weyerhaeuser, while the forest as a whole supports such activities as hunting, fishing, and hiking (Appalachian Trail hikers particularly value the forested landscape). The surrounding woods also add aesthetic value for many seasonal home owners, tourists, and for the recreation industry in the area. There are also a number of private landowners who have large tracts of land but are not participating in the Tree Growth Program.

According to 2019 figures, Caratunk landowners had 27,216.43 acres registered under the Tree Growth Tax Law: 8900.9 acres in softwood, 11,275.2 in mixed wood, and 7,040.33 acres in hardwood (the remainder in non-commercial and miscellaneous) This represents 78% of the taxable land in Town. Weyerhaeuser is the biggest single owner, with 25,502 acres. The Tree Growth Tax Law allows for the valuation of commercial forest based on its current use rather than its potential fair market value for more intensive uses. Brookfield and CMP are the other major landowners, though most of their land is measured in frontage rather than acreage, and it is not eligible for tree growth enrollment.

With forestry as a major land use activity, Town road maintenance is an issue of concern. Large logging trucks have a negative net effect on Pleasant Pond Road and Main Street, for example. Poor forest practices are also a concern for the water quality of Caratunk's ponds and streams.

There are three(3) public lots in Caratunk. The Department of Conservation manages these. One of the lots is accessible only via the Pleasant Pond Rd and Main Street. Harvesting in 2018-2019 and harvesting from The Forks section of the public lot did severe damage to Caratunk roads. The Select Board and Planning Board must prevent this from happening in the future.

Logging operations do not affect the residential area.

There is no community forest or garden.

Findings

Caratunk has an abundance of outstanding natural resource assets. They range from the mountain areas to pristine ponds to the Kennebec River. In most of the town, the combination of ownership and geography act as a severe

constraint to future development, but not to the enjoyment per se of the country.

Pleasant Pond is the most developed resource in town. Though it has outstanding water quality, it could be vulnerable to future development or forest activity. In fact, a large percentage of the town is within a lake watershed, and forestry activities have the potential to impact the resource.

If Weyerhaeuser were to stop harvesting and sell their tracts of land, there is a concern for development. Development of these acres would cause a serious impact on Caratunk’s roads, character and fiscal responsibilities. Sub-division laws would pertain, and all of the Weyerhaeuser land is strictly zoned in Management or in Resource Protection. Landowners could always petition the Town for a zone change in the future.

Development in the village and along Route 201 is constrained by several factors. Along most of Route 201, land to the east slopes sharply upward. Much of the land abutting Pleasant Pond Road is too steep as well. To the west of 201, most of the land is owned by Brookfield. Of the part that isn't, much is overlying the town's aquifer.

Though there is no farm activity in Caratunk, forestry more than makes up for it. Weyerhaeuser is the major owner, and corporate management policies could have an impact on the town's future. Continued good management and harvesting practices will act to preserve Caratunk's environment for years to come.

Beyond our district zones in the Land Use Ordinance, Tree Growth Program and Department of Conservation regulations, there are currently no further regulatory or non-regulatory steps being taken to protect forestry lands. There are no land trusts beyond Caratunk’s current private landowners.

Table 4-1
Tree Growth Report for 2020

| | SWAcres | MWAcres | HWAcres |
|--------------|---------|----------|---------|
| 1/10-4 | 0 | 27 | 78.23 |
| 1/10-5 | 0 | 29.1 | 7.4 |
| 1/10-6 | 0 | 12 | 30 |
| 1/10-7 | 11 | 18.3 | 11 |
| 1/10-1 | 0 | 7.7 | 42 |
| '2/1 | 68 | 0 | 286 |
| 1/10-2 | 8 | 10.2 | 31.3 |
| 3/3-1 | 1 | 71 | 0 |
| 1/10-3 | 4.9 | 26.4 | 17.4 |
| 3/42,43 | 143 | 231 | 542 |
| Weyerhaeuser | 8665 | 10842.5 | 5995 |
| Total | 8900.90 | 11275.20 | 7040.33 |

5 Who We Are - Population and Demographics

The demographic trends of Caratunk’s population provide insights into its economic health and its anticipated needs. The town’s population and its limited economic activity indicate a town in decline and an opportunity for creative problem-solving. This chapter is a review of the characteristics of our past and present population, in an attempt to identify what future growth might be anticipated.

At 66 persons (2018), Caratunk is at 28% of its peak population of 235 in 1910 (Figure 1). Caratunk’s population in the 2010 Census ranked 495 out of 533 unorganized townships, plantations, and towns. Caratunk's recent decline in population is significant in that it now has fewer people than the plantations of Pleasant Ridge and The Forks. Table 5-1, below, illustrates Caratunk's population and growth rate in relation to neighboring towns, from the U.S. Census.

| | <u>1970</u> | <u>1980</u> | <u>'80-'70</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>'90-'80</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>'00-'90</u> | <u>2010</u> | <u>'10-'00</u> | <u>2018</u> | <u>'18-'10</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Caratunk | 96 | 84 | -13% | 98 | 17% | 108 | 10% | 69 | -36% | 66 | -4% |
| Jackman | 848 | 1003 | 18% | 920 | -8% | 718 | -22% | 862 | 20% | 823 | -5% |
| Moscow | 586 | 570 | -3% | 608 | 7% | 577 | -5% | 512 | -11% | 504 | -2% |
| Pleasant Ridge | 116 | 99 | -15% | 91 | -8% | 83 | -9% | 93 | 12% | 89 | -4% |
| The Forks | 74 | 72 | -3% | 63 | -13% | 47 | -25% | 60 | 28% | 58 | -3% |

Source: US Census 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2018 (est)

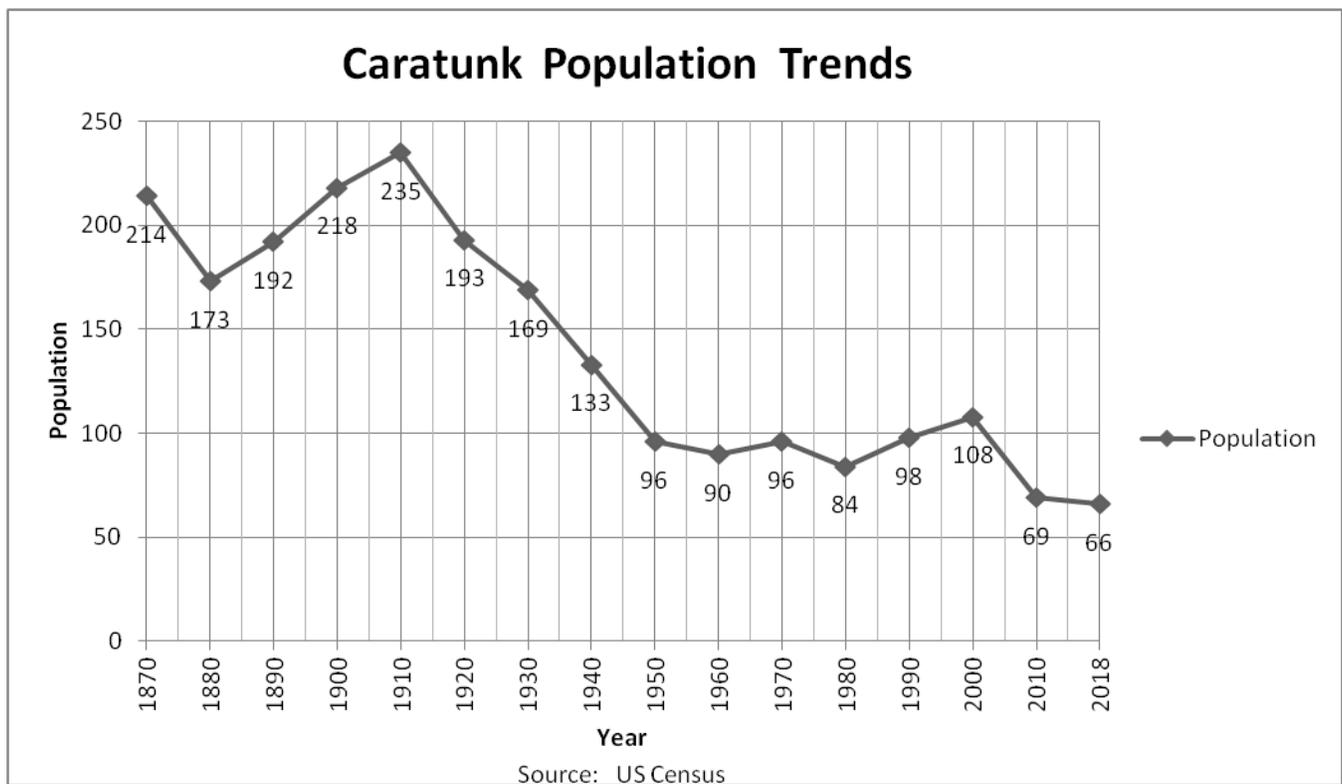
As the table 5-1 shows, Caratunk’s population continues to be smaller than the neighboring towns of Jackman and Moscow by a considerable amount and has shown a decline of 61% since 2000. The table also shows that towns and plantations have all seen a decline in population since the 2010 Census.

These statistics do not show the relative influence of seasonal residents. The census counts only where people live on April 1, so the town's summer population is a matter for speculation. We can speculate, based on 166 (2010 Census) seasonal homes (assuming an average of three persons per housing unit), that Caratunk's peak summer population could be as high as 621. Counting campers, rafters, B&B occupants, and AT hikers, and recreational tourists there could be over 1,000 people in Caratunk on a given summer's day.

Caratunk has not always hovered below the threshold of one hundred citizens. As Figure 1 below shows, at least three times in our history, Caratunk has had double that population, most recently in 1910. At that time, our population was only slightly less than Jackman, Moscow, Embden and other nearby towns. Many of these towns were already in decline from a great post-civil war exodus. Evidently, a bit of that exodus hit Caratunk at that time, too, because population dropped precipitously for the next 40 years.

Figure 1 below also shows that our population wavered little from 1950 to 2000. Ordinarily, this is a sign of a very stable local economy and not much migration either way; however, since the end of the 20th century, stability may no longer be an apt description.

Figure 1



The brief period of increase in population between 1980 and 2000 can be attributed to the growth of recreational activity, primarily associated with whitewater rafting and other recreation-focused activities. Economic and environmental factors will continue to affect our population. People in Caratunk are accustomed to commuting to work. Recent improvements in technology make it possible for people to now work remotely. A number of seasonal residents are able to spend more time in Caratunk because of the changes in technology, namely broadband Internet access. Will the improvements in high-speed connectivity enable more people to contemplate becoming year-round residents? Several respondents to our recent community survey indicate that this is a real possibility.

Population Projections

The population in cities and rural areas of the Northeast continue to decline, while warm areas of the South and West increase. The pattern of decline that is evident in Caratunk mirrors this national trend of migration. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 2018, non-farm employment in Somerset County declined by 6% between 2008 and 2017. Somerset County’s population declined by 3.2% during the same time period.

Population projections are a means of putting trends into visual images. If the local, regional, and national trends continue, it paints a bleak image of Caratunk’s potential for future growth. Projections also allow you to manage the future, or at least to see what the impact will be of managing the present. Population change is a cause-and-effect thing. Local actions like a major new business or a downtown fire, could cause change, and the change would have an effect on the number of houses, jobs, and school children in the community.

Table 5-2 Population Projections (State Economist)

| Population observed | | | Population projected | | | | Percent change from previous period | | | | | Total | |
|---------------------|------|------|----------------------|------|------|------|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 2006 | 2011 | 2016 | 2021 | 2026 | 2031 | 2036 | 2006-2011 | 2011-2016 | 2016-2021 | 2021-2026 | 2026-2031 | 2031-2036 | 2016-2036 |
| 84 | 68 | 66 | 63 | 61 | 59 | 57 | -19.0% | -2.9% | -4.5% | -3.2% | -3.3% | -3.4% | -13.6% |

<https://www.maine.gov/dafs/economist/demographic-projections>

Decline Projection

A significant decline in the population could result from drastic changes in either economic or environmental conditions that Caratunk is dependent on. What would happen if there is a decline in area recreational businesses, a moratorium on timber cutting, or a major fire in the town? These are circumstances that the town really has no control over, yet they would have a serious effect on the tax base, number of local jobs, number of school children, etc. Since 2000, Caratunk has seen its only school close, its only store close, its fire department dissolved, and its postal service reduced. Access to the nearest drug store is 50 miles away, and its ambulance service is 20 miles away. A town with few services, and little indication of offering them in the future, is unlikely to see its year-round population increase. This loss of infrastructure either serves as a warning or doesn't bode well for Caratunk's future.

Growth Projection

A major new local business or large subdivision could cause the town to gain population in sudden bursts, however, the demand for a large subdivision is dependent on economic growth and/or access to recreation. A new four-season resort or lumber mill could create a number of jobs, which, in turn, could produce an increased demand for housing for families. The small number (number) of new year-round homes that have been constructed in Caratunk since 2010, are for seasonal residents. According to the January 2020 Caratunk Community Survey, 67% of non-residents with seasonal housing units in Caratunk have no plans to convert them to year-round use. Survey results also indicate recreational economic growth was a high priority among all respondents. When asked, "Please indicate your primary reason for spending time in Caratunk", 76% indicated recreation and scenic beauty.

Further along these lines, the latest family to move into Caratunk *year-round* came in 2019 from Madison, Maine, just 40 miles away. This family indicated that they moved to Caratunk for the rural, scenic and recreational values and to make a homestead for their family. This family increased the student base by 25%, and the adults will hopefully be engaged in community or municipal service – all because of the natural and peaceful way-of-life and recreational landscape.

A Dynamic Population

What does population growth have to do with changes to a town? Migration, births, and deaths are the variables involve in change.

Population change is a result of two variables: migration and natural change. Natural change, the difference between births and deaths, tends to remain steady over time. (See table at right.)

Household size is another variable to consider when analyzing a town's population growth. Household size is the average number of people in a housing unit.

Table 5-3

| Years | 1990-2000 | 2001-2010 | 2011-2018 |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Births | | 2 | 0 |
| Deaths | | 8 | 7 |
| Net Change | | -6 | -7 |

Since 2000, the average household size in Caratunk has changed only slightly and is now at 2.34 persons per household (Table 5-4).

Table 5-4
Household Size Changes

| | <u>1970</u> | <u>1980</u> | <u>'80-'70</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>'90-'80</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>'00-'90</u> | <u>2010</u> | <u>'10-'00</u> | <u>2018</u> | <u>'18-'10</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Caratunk | 3.00 | 2.55 | -15% | 2.72 | 7% | 2.57 | -6% | 1.68 | -35% | 2.34 | 39% |
| Somerset County | 3.20 | 2.87 | -10% | 2.67 | -7% | 2.44 | -9% | 2.35 | -4% | 2.32 | -1% |
| Maine | 3.16 | 2.75 | -13% | 2.56 | -7% | 2.39 | -7% | 2.32 | -3% | 2.33 | 0% |
| United States | 3.20 | 2.82 | -12% | 2.63 | -7% | 2.59 | -2% | 2.58 | 0% | n/a | |

Source: US Census 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2018 (est)

What is the significance of Caratunk’s current household size? What effect can it have? Household size is a major factor affecting housing demand. For example:

Caratunk's population in 1990: 98 Household size: 2.72 = occupied housing units: 36

Caratunk population in 2018: 66 Household size: 2.34; = occupied housing units: 28

Caratunk's population declined by 32 persons in 20 years and household size decreased as well. The calculated number of housing units required is 28. Fewer homes are needed in Caratunk because of declining population and household size. According to the 2010 Census, there were 41 occupied housing units year-round. We have to assume that the small change in household size accompanied with the decline in population will not lead to any increase in housing demand in the near future.

A Population Profile

"Who we are" also means knowing something about where we are from, and such things as the average age and educational level of our citizens.

Nativity: According to the 1990 census, about 80 percent of Caratunk residents were born in Maine. While the census does not ask if you have lived in the same town all your life, it does give us some clues. For example, although 2/3 of the residents, as of 1990, had lived in their current house more than five years, only 15 percent of the homes have been lived in by the same people for over 20 years.

Age: The average age of a Caratunk resident in 1990 was 33.6. The average age in 2013 was 53.7, a dramatic increase which reflects an aging community.

Table 5-5 shows Caratunk’s changes in the ages of its population. There has been a 71% decline in the population of persons age 44 and under since 2000. The population of persons 45 and older has increased 64% during this same time period. These data points reflect the aging population in Caratunk and Maine’s population as a whole.

Table 5-5
Distribution of Population by Age Group

| <u>Age Group</u> | <u>1970</u> | <u>1980</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2010</u> |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 0-17 | 30 | 18 | 34 | 26 | 4 |
| 18-44 | 29 | 27 | 32 | 44 | 16 |
| 45-64 | 27 | 24 | 11 | 21 | 34 |
| 65+ | 10 | 15 | 21 | 17 | 15 |

Sources: US Census

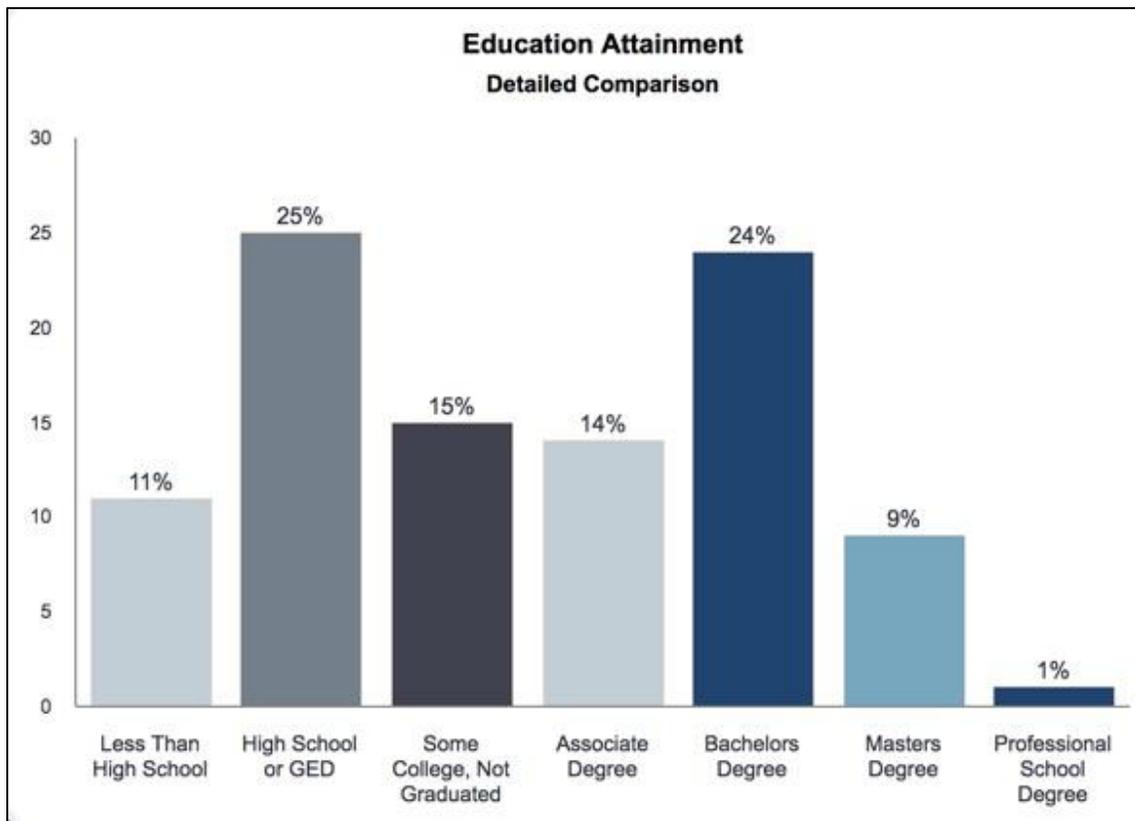
What are the needs of a town’s aging population? How does a remote, rural town consider access to health services, the ease of access to grocery shopping, healthful recreation, and transportation? Is Caratunk prepared to address the needs of its population?

Education

Studies show a strong correlation exists between the levels of education and skills of the population and economic success. Education matters, too, when it comes to health, for example, by 2011, the prevalence of diabetes had reached 15% for adults without a high school education, compared with 7% for college graduates. (National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 10(256). 2012).

Families with higher incomes can more easily purchase healthy foods, have time to exercise regularly, and pay for health services and transportation. Conversely, the job insecurity, low wages, and lack of assets associated with less education can make individuals and families more vulnerable during hard times—which can lead to poor nutrition, unstable housing, and unmet medical needs. Source: Education and Health Initiative (EHI), a program of the Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Society and Health, supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2012-2015.

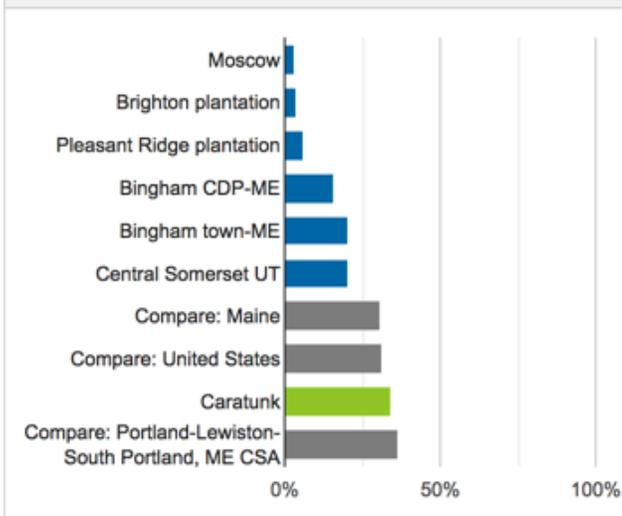
The percentage of high school graduates was 85% in 1980, 93% in 1990, and 89% in 2018. The percentage of citizens with a bachelor's degree or higher went from 0 in 1980 to 31% in 1990, and 34% in 2018. As society shifts more and more to a knowledge-based economy, the places that will do well, and that are resilient in the face of change are those with the educated populations. The Education Attainment chart below disaggregates education levels of Caratunk’s population of those 25 years of age and older in 2018.



Source: American Community Survey, 2018.

In a comparison to nearby towns, Maine cities, the state, and the US, the population of the small, rural town of Caratunk seems to be an anomaly.

Figure 2: Caratunk, ME Bachelors Degree or Better Education



Findings

- 61% decline in our overall population since 2000
- Current population of 66 persons
- Average age is 53.7 years
- 88% of those age 25 or older have earned a high school education or higher
 - Since 2001 the ratio of births to deaths is 2:15.
 - 76% of survey responders indicated recreation and scenic beauty as their reasons for spending time in Caratunk.

Source: American Community Survey, 2018

The lack of economic opportunities, coupled with the town's aging population, is significant factors in its decline. Caratunk's last increase in population occurred because of the development of new types of recreation and the recreational businesses that followed. Does any future growth of its population lie in the development of recreational infrastructure? If so, it will be critical to striking a balance between the development of economic opportunities and the maintenance of the qualities of the area that attract people in the first place.

Having a degree does not guarantee success. When one considers the levels of education, the average age of a Caratunk resident and their life experiences, one might expect that its citizenry is capable of addressing the town's future while honoring its institutional knowledge. The key is to become an involved citizen.

If Caratunk's population continues to decline, the town will find it more difficult to manage the required affairs of an organized town. Towns in rural counties, experiencing population declines like Caratunk will continue to struggle to fund and maintain its transportation infrastructure, its access to public services and housing. Caratunk's comprehensive plan is a tool to use its institutional knowledge to make changes that would have a positive effect on future growth.

What will be the impact of social, economic, and environmental conditions on Caratunk's future population? Planning is critical to the preservation of a town's character and its environmental assets and for sustainable infrastructure. Additional chapters will address these factors.

References:

<https://theconversation.com/the-us-has-become-a-nation-of-suburbs-101501> , Christopher Boone Dean and Professor of Sustainability, Arizona State University, author

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/05/most-of-america-s-rural-areas-are-doomed-to-decline>

6 Economy

This chapter concerns Caratunk’s workforce and its economic climate.

Growth in Household Incomes

For most of us, our family incomes are gradually rising. So is inflation, along with housing prices, taxes, and the cost of nearly everything. Individually, then, the question is whether we are better off than we used to be. And as a community, income data can provide the answers to a few more questions, such as, whether higher incomes are only because more family members have to work, or whether we can afford to pay for any more town services, or whether new residents have significantly different income expectations than long-time ones.

Table 6-1 shows the growth in per capita and household income between Census periods, in Caratunk and other communities. "Per capita income" is the total income of the town divided by the total number of residents, "household income" is the total divided by the number of households. They use the same numbers, but they grow at a different rate, because of changes in household size.

| Table 6-1 | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <u>Growth in Household Income and Per Capita Income, 1989-2018</u> | | | | | | |
| | | | | | <u>Change (%)</u> | |
| | <u>'89 HHI</u> | <u>'89 Per Cap</u> | <u>'18 HHI</u> | <u>'17 Per Cap</u> | <u>HHI</u> | <u>Per Cap</u> |
| Caratunk | \$ 19,167 | \$ 10,448 | \$ 58,333 | \$ 23,302 | 304% | 223% |
| Jackman | \$ 21,719 | \$ 10,970 | \$ 41,875 | \$ 24,984 | 193% | 228% |
| Moscow | \$ 18,864 | \$ 7,175 | \$ 35,833 | \$ 16,394 | 190% | 228% |
| Solon | \$ 19,250 | \$ 10,113 | \$ 54,688 | \$ 24,287 | 284% | 240% |
| Somerset County | \$ 22,829 | \$ 10,471 | \$ 42,491 | \$ 22,641 | 186% | 216% |
| HHI: Median Household Income | | | | | | |
| Source: US Census, ACS 2017 | | | | | | |

During this period (1989-2019), the total inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, has increased x132 %.

Table 6-1 demonstrates that Caratunk has moved from "below average" to "above average" among our neighbors in household incomes.

Table 6-2
Caratunk Workforce 2017

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|------|
| Residents | <u>66</u> | | |
| Working | 53 | | |
| | Men | 33 | 62% |
| | Women | 20 | 38% |
| <u>Industry</u> | | | |
| Agriculture | | 5 | 9% |
| Construction | | 7 | 13% |
| Manufacturing | | 2 | 4% |
| Retail | | 2 | 4% |
| Transportation | | 5 | 9% |
| Information | | 3 | 6% |
| Prof, admin, management | | 10 | 19% |
| Educational, health | | 2 | 4% |
| Recreation, hospitality | | <u>17</u> | 32% |
| | | 53 | 100% |

Source: ACS 2013-2017

Table 6-3
Income vs. Inflation

| | <u>1990</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2017</u> | |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------|
| Household Income | \$19,167 | \$36,591 | \$55,313 | 189% |
| CPI (Inflation) | 131.7 | 172.2 | 251.20 | 91% |
| Home Value (median) | \$46,300 | n/a | \$156,800 | 239% |
| Property Tax (on avg home) | \$446 | | \$1,160 | 160% |

US Census, ASC

Incomes seem to be keeping ahead of inflation in Caratunk. Table 6-3 shows relevant comparisons. It shows that, on average, income and housing values increased by 189% and 239%, respectively, between 1990 and 2017. Both outpaced the general rate of inflation by double or more. Caratunk’s home values have increased greatly due to the increased sale prices and value of new home construction of river and pond frontage homes (seasonal and year-round), as Caratunk is home Pleasant Pond as well as the Kennebec River. Frontage real estate sales have skyrocketed over the years. On the contrary, the Caratunk village (along Main Street) has seen few home improvements and no new builds. Still the village area is nearly little room left for development and the highest concentration of year-round residents.

Poverty Status

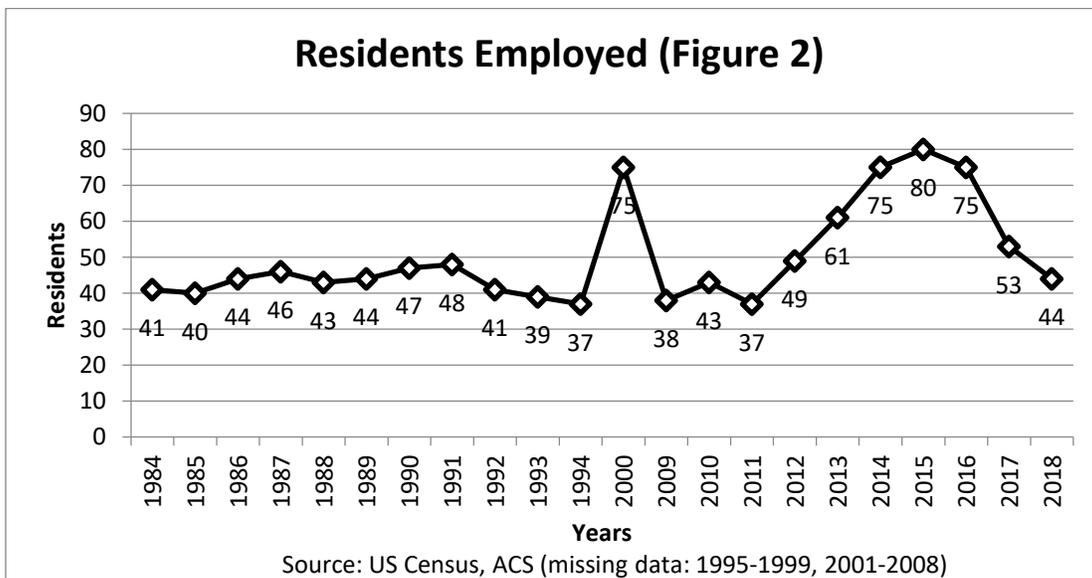
The Census also calculates the number of persons in a category labeled "poverty status." The defining line is based on number of family members, income levels and local cost of living, so there is no single number we can call "poverty level." For example, the poverty line for a three-person family with one child and two adults was \$20,202 in 2018. (source: USDA Economic Research Service using US Census Bureau) The American Survey

Five Year Estimates show that about 17.9% (down from 21% in 1998) of Caratunk residents fall under the poverty line with a 23.5 % margin of error. This compares with neighboring towns as follows: West Forks has 42.9% under the poverty line, Moscow has 14.9%, and Jackman has 7.9%. That said, Caratunk still has no General Assistance participants.

The Caratunk Workforce

The workforce in Caratunk consists of the persons either actively working or looking for work, generally the majority of people between the ages of 16 and 65. According to the census, about 53 residents were in the workforce in 2017, 67% of the men and 38% of the women.

The census data are only statistical estimates. The Maine Department of Labor keeps more accurate data. Figure 2, below, shows how many Caratunk residents have been employed on average for the past ten years. There is a gap in data from 1995-2009 and what could be a statistical error in 2000. Although the graph shows us sliding to a ten-year low in 1994 and 2011, the actual numbers are very small, i.e. a difference of 11 people from high to low.



In Caratunk, 66% of residents were working in 2018. Moscow, for example, has a 44% labor force of 221 and a population of 504. Jackman has a 40% labor force of 332 for a population of 833. (Source: American Fact Finder)

Workers are more accurately measured in proportion to the number of families than the number of people overall. In 1980, Caratunk had 44 workers (by the Census count) for 33 families, an average of 1.33 workers per family. In 1990, we had 38 workers for 32 families, an average of 1.2. In 2017, we had 53 workers for 29 families, an average of 1.83. Of course, this value can be skewed if the term “family” is representing a single, summer worker in town for the current recreation season. Most census workers are surveying the town during the spring, summer or fall as housing units are more accessible, however, this is also when the temporary residents are in town.

With a mean travel time of 17.7 minutes, most of the respondents work locally in Caratunk or the Forks Area. More than 57% of the workers in Caratunk drive to work. About 17% of Caratunk residents also utilize the urban Skowhegan/Madison areas for employment and services. Not every new Caratunk household has to have a local job, but a certain proportion of new jobs will go to non-residents.

According to the census data in Table 6-2, of the employed workforce in Caratunk, 32% are classified as "Recreation and Hospitality", 19% as "Professional, administrative or management", and 13% as "Construction". Unlike the forest industry jobs of the past, the majority of residents today are employed in the outdoor recreation industry or construction. The current workforce indicates 26% are engaged in home-based businesses and 12% report that they are self-employed. With the increase in technology, residents can work remotely and still enjoy Caratunk's natural surroundings.

Local Business

Table 6-4 shows a listing of local businesses, including home workers and government employees, developed by the Comprehensive Planning Committee in 2020.

| Local Business Inventory (Table 6-4) | | | |
|---|--|------------------|--------------------|
| Name | Type of Business | Location | # Employees |
| Caratunk House | Seasonal; Lodging hostel | Main Street | 2 |
| Chadbourne Logging | Year-round | Main Street | 1, self |
| Downeast Adventure Bound | Seasonal; Outdoor youth adventures (whitewater, ropes, climbing, kayak/canoe, overnights), camping, cabins | Rte. 201 | 20-25 seasonal |
| ECL Outdoors | Seasonal; whitewater, fat tire, canoe/kayak, yurt, cabins | Rte. 201 | New 2020 |
| Frigon's Gravel Pit | Year-round; | Rte. 201 | family |
| Gray Outfitting | Year-round; Birddog trainer and guided outfitting service | Main Street | family |
| Kennebec River Angler | Seasonal; Guided fishing trips | multiple | 4 subcontractors |
| Lemay Building & Remodeling | Year-round | Pleasant Pond Rd | 1, self |
| Maine Forest Service | Year-round | Main Street | |
| Maine Guide Service | Year-round; Hunt, fish, snowmobile, recreation guide; Appalachian Trail Ferry Service | W. Shore Rd | family |
| Maine Lakeside Cabins | Year-round; Lodging rentals, event center | Rte. 201 | 5 |
| Maine Powersports | Year-round; Powersport rentals | Rte. 201 | 3 |
| Northern Maine Roofing | Year-round; Steel roofing | Main Street | family |
| Pleasant Pond Inn | Year-round; Lodging rental | W. Shore | family |
| Sam White Excavation | Gravel pit | Rte. 201 | 1, self |
| Sterling Inn | Year-round; Lodging | Rte. 201 | family |
| US Postal Service | Year-round; Limited hours M-F: 2hrs, Sat: 4hrs | Main Street | 1 |

It's clear from the listing that only four(4) of the companies are non-recreation, another four(4) are seasonal and the remaining seven(7) are open year-round. Recreation-based companies find it necessary to operate in more than one season if they are going to keep employees and maintain infrastructure. Prior to 2000, this tourism economy was focused around the whitewater rafting season. After Coburn Mountain Summit snowmobile trail opened and the Route 201 snowmobile bridge and the permanent Spencer Stream Bridge were built, The Forks Area became a snowmobiling destination hub. This boom in vehicular and snowmobile traffic brought the local tourism economy to a strong level where whitewater outfitters and lodges could maintain year-round employees. Tourism companies added ATV recreation, hiking, hunting, and fishing to diversify. It's likely that future employment opportunities will be consistent with seasonal and year-round positions. What are the

assets that Caratunk can build on that would be most impactful? Listed below are what we recognize to be the town's business assets and liabilities.

Business Assets:

- Improved communications: DSL, cell tower
- Quality of life
- Natural resources
- Local regulation
- Route 201 (Canada/U.S. corridor)
- Home businesses
- Well-educated workforce
- Healthy environment

Business Liabilities:

- Limited workforce
- Remote location/lack of housing
- Seasonal businesses
- Aging population
- Little land physically suitable for development
- No town water or sewer
- No full-time police or fire
- Few amenities, e.g. restaurants

From this list, we can develop a profile of the type of business likely to locate here, or the types of business we should be attracting. With a limited workforce and market area, it would be a small business, probably owner-operated. Without water, sewer, or other municipal infrastructure, it would not be a very large business, anyway.

We should endeavor to attract that is not only environmentally friendly and non-polluting businesses but those that rely on environmental quality and natural resources. The rafting industry is an example. Outdoor recreation and “ecotourism” are popular and growing businesses. With access to other natural assets, such as the Appalachian Trail and scenic ponds and hills, Caratunk is in a position to take advantage of its “quality of place” to sustain its economy.

We should discourage, through regulation or prohibitions, if necessary, businesses that would have a detrimental impact on the community or degrade our natural resource base. Caratunk would have difficulty accommodating businesses that would stress our capacity to provide additional public services and infrastructure, such as requiring additional fire protection equipment, increasing traffic, or adding stress to our roads.

Additionally, neither Caratunk’s assessor nor Selectboard are interested in pursuing TIFs.

Employment has declined somewhat over the past ten years, though Caratunk's seasonal employment rate is twice what our year-round rate is. Many of the year-round workers are either education professionals or in construction. Most of the seasonal workers are in a tourist-related business. Caratunk needs to actively support Maine’s Connect ME. Connectivity is an essential infrastructure to Caratunk’s future. Maine’s Economic Development Strategy points out that *connectivity... enables talent attraction, innovation, skills upgrading, and access to a global economy*. Within Caratunk, the most successful and sustainable business opportunities seem to be in recreation and tourist oriented enterprises and our business attraction assets support that assumption.

7 Housing

Caratunk has a distinctive community character, one borne of the land we live on and the people we live with. That character is demonstrated in our land use and development patterns. This chapter addresses how the town is laid out, our current and projected land use patterns, and the profile of our housing.

Past and Current Land Use

Caratunk's population of 66 persons is concentrated in a very small area. Only 4,000 of the town's 34,000 acres are privately owned. Nearly 27,000 acres are owned by Weyerhaeuser Company. The remaining acreage is designated as Caratunk public lots. Most people live either along the shores of Pleasant Pond or in the village, located on old Route 201. See the *Developed Areas Map*. Others live along Pleasant Pond Road, or on Route 201.

There is a total of 42 housing units in the village area, which consists primarily of a mile-long Main Street joining Route 201 at both ends, the junction of Pleasant Pond Road, and two short side streets. Some of these housing units are year-round. With an increasing number that have become seasonal, the seasonal may soon outnumber year-round. Additionally, some are vacant. The building that housed the former Caratunk General Store contains seasonal rental units and the US Post Office, and is for sale. The former Caratunk School is now the Caratunk Town Office, the former fire station is vacant, and the former church is now privately-owned. A few home-based businesses exist in the Caratunk village.

There are nearly 100 housing units surrounding Pleasant Pond. Some are primitive camps, only seasonally accessible. Most are only seasonally occupied. A few are occupied year-round. There is now only one business, the Pleasant Pond Inn, used year-round, and is for sale.

Most of the Wyman Lake frontage is owned by Brookfield White Pine Hydro, LLC (Brookfield) or Central Maine Power (CMP), abuts Route 201, and has very steep slopes which limit the potential for development. Brookfield owns a seasonal campground on McDougall Pond which also borders Wyman Lake and Route 201. Additionally, Caratunk leases land from Brookfield on Wyman Lake and is responsible for the maintenance of a public boat landing and picnic area on this parcel of land. The only other developed Wyman Lake frontage in Caratunk includes a three-lot subdivision leased from CMP with seasonal housing units, and a privately-owned resort, Maine Lakeside Cabins. The Kennebec River empties into Wyman Lake just north of Maine Lakeside Cabins. Ownership of river frontage, in this area, is divided into three categories: privately-owned year-round and seasonal housing units, Adventure Bound, a private recreational business that occupies the former York Sawmill lot, and the federally-owned Appalachian Trail (AT) land, adjacent to the established AT river crossing and ferry site. The remainder, mostly in the north end of town, remains in Brookfield ownership and abuts Route 201 with no land development potential.

There are several privately-owned properties with housing units scattered along the east side of Route 201 in Caratunk. Most of these are seasonal. There are also a few privately-owned properties operating commercially along the east side of Route 201 – the Sterling Inn, a gravel pit, and recreational/seasonal businesses.

There is one parcel on the east side of Route 201, abutting the north end of Caratunk village, where a cell tower is under construction.

The remainder of the town is virtually undeveloped (see *Parcel Map*). Except for three large public lots, a 7-lot subdivision comprised of mostly tree growth land, and a previously-owned U.S. Government parcel, now owned by a private corporation, the land is owned by Weyerhaeuser Company and is currently classified as *tree growth* for tax purposes. There are approximately a dozen camp leases on the many ponds (Baker, Heald, and Moxie Lake area) on leased land.

Existing Land Use Analyses

- Most recent development in Caratunk could be described as occurring both lot-by-lot or in subdivision form. Most lot-by-lot development has generally occurred around Pleasant Pond. The only subdivision development occurred on former paper company land and was sold to a private developer. This subdivision is located adjacent to Route 201 at the south end of town in an area known as Cates Hill and consists of seven (7) large, multi-acre lots.
- In keeping with the town's vision of protecting the town's character, the town has already established zoning along Route 201 to promote and regulate future development. The subdivision on Cates Hill is located in an area consistent with this vision. With a declining population, there is no guarantee that Caratunk will have the administrative capacity to manage its land use and zoning regulations in the future; however, currently, the Planning Board and code enforcement officer are keeping the town's ordinances current with state mandates and are addressing issues regarding renewable energies. It's difficult to estimate the amount of land needed for future development in a town with a declining population.
- The Planning Board has consistently tried to keep its local standards and regulations reasonable for potential developers and to maintain small town appeal. For example, the minimum lot size of (40,000 sq ft) and the 10' required setback for new construction anywhere in Caratunk, allows many who own historically small lots the opportunity to make improvements to existing housing units without the burden of standards that would prohibit improvements entirely. In its attempt to foster an inviting appearance, Caratunk has, in recent years, pursued, and continues to be vigilant about, the removal of junked car graveyards, restoration or removal of derelict buildings and structures, unregistered vehicles, and other unsightly items.
- Caratunk does participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. Though floodplains along the Kennebec River and Wyman Lake are identified and protected, the town has yet to clarify the floodplain designation on land abutting Pleasant Pond where there have been several instances of erroneous floodplain designation. Pleasant Pond's outflow and water levels are controlled by a dam. This dam was recently reconstructed and improved by the owner, The Pleasant Pond Protective Association. The 100-year flood of record that occurred in 1987, only affected only two properties on the shores of the pond.

Future Development

The overall amount of future development is limited by several factors:

- Physical features
 - Since the vast majority of undeveloped land in Caratunk is currently designated as tree growth, it is zoned as part of the management district which limits commercial and residential development unless property was removed from tree growth and rezoning occurred.
 - Floodplain, aquifers, wildlife habitat, and areas of scenic beauty
- Pattern of property ownership
 - Weyerhaeuser Company property which, despite several changes in ownership over the decades, has consistently remained designated as tree growth.
 - Brookfield/CMP river corridor property
 - In the small remainder of land available for housing and commercial ownership, only 2% of survey respondents chose the Pleasant Pond area for residential development. Commercial development is already prohibited in the Pleasant Pond area.
- Accessibility
 - Lack of year-round roads
 - Remoteness

Although the State may have housing goals, Caratunk is not in a position to physically meet such goals. Lot sizes,

road widths, setback cannot be reduced any further. There is very little opportunity for apartment buildings. There is neither need nor place for a mobile home park; nor is there a need for a “workforce housing committee”. Caratunk will not force a 10% increase in residential development.

Housing Development

Please note: The Maine State Housing Authority omitted the housing data, Homeownership Affordability Index, for the Towns of Caratunk or Bingham or the West Forks Plantation within their Somerset County listings.

A basic need in any community is housing, however, as noted in the chapter, *Population: Who We Are*, Caratunk’s declining population has resulted in little need for growth in the area of new housing units. Based on an analysis of housing ownership changes since 2000, a definite trend has emerged. In excess of 24 housing units in Caratunk have changed ownership. Of that number, regardless of whether the ownership change occurred because of death or the migration of year-round residents, majority ownership is now held by seasonal residents.

In reference to the data shown in Table 7-1, nineteen (19) new housing units have been added since 2000, yet the number of year-round occupied housing units has declined. As anticipated, the number of year-round vacant housing units has increased, and the growth in new seasonal year-round housing units exceeds the growth in year-round occupied housing units.

Table 7-1
Changes in Tenancy Characteristics, 1980-2010

| <u>Tenancy</u> | 1980 | | 1990 | | 2000 | | 2010 | |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Total Housing Units | 164 | | 153 | | 202 | 100% | 221 | |
| Year-round occupied | 33 | 20% | 36 | 24% | 42 | 21% | 41 | 19% |
| Owner- | 27 | 16% | 32 | 21% | 35 | 17% | 38 | 17% |
| Renter- | 6 | 4% | 4 | 3% | 7 | 3% | 3 | 1% |
| Year-round Vacant | 7 | 4% | 2 | 1% | 3 | 1% | 5 | 2% |
| Seasonal | 124 | 76% | 115 | 75% | 157 | 78% | 166 | 75% |

Source: US Census 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010

According to Table 7-2, the percentage of housing units occupied year-round in Caratunk is substantially lower than that of surrounding towns, whereas the percentage of seasonal housing units exceeds that of all surrounding towns. For the foreseeable future, additional housing units to accommodate year-round residents are not needed. Just the opposite may be the case for seasonal housing units.

Rental housing units in Caratunk is negligible in comparison to surrounding towns. The rental housing that is available is affordable to and usually utilized by seasonal workers in the tourism industry.

Table 7-2
2010 Tenancy and Structural: Caratunk & Neighboring Towns

| <u>Tenancy</u> | <u>Caratunk</u> | <u>Moscow</u> | <u>West Forks</u> | <u>Jackman</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Total Housing Units | 221 | 362 | 124 | 726 |
| Year-round occupied | 19% | 63% | 27% | 53% |
| Owner- | 17% | 58% | 22% | 45% |
| Renter- | 1% | 3% | 5% | 8% |
| Year-round Vacant | 2% | 2% | 73% | 6% |
| Seasonal | 75% | 29% | 67% | 34% |

Source: US Census 2010

Housing Affordability

Housing value reflects the quality of housing in town. If the housing that is built in town is of high value, it follows that it will also be of high quality. On the other hand, if the town experiences too much high value housing, it could limit the opportunities for poor people. The table below shows how Caratunk compares to our neighbors in home value and changes since 1990.

Table 7-3
Regional Median Housing Value, 1990-2017

| | <u>1990</u> | <u>2010</u> | <u>Change (%)</u> | <u>2017</u> | <u>Change (%)</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Caratunk | \$ 46,300 | \$ 127,100 | 275% | \$ 156,800 | 123% |
| Jackman | \$ 49,300 | \$ 120,300 | 244% | \$ 131,900 | 110% |
| Moscow | \$ 39,300 | \$ 81,500 | 207% | \$ 60,900 | 75% |
| West Forks | \$ 47,500 | \$ 86,700 | 183% | \$ 85,000 | 98% |
| Somerset County | \$ 56,400 | \$ 109,500 | 194% | \$ 108,000 | 99% |

Source: US Census, ACS 2017

According to table 7-3, the median household value of housing units in Caratunk has steadily risen and is now higher than in any surrounding towns. It might be inferred from this table that housing is becoming unaffordable. Since the census only considers homeowners’ estimate of value, and most sales are purchased for seasonal use by new owners whose median income may exceed the local median income, estimates of

value by current home owners may be inflated. In addition, since so few new housing units are being constructed, it only takes a couple of high-end homes to skew the median housing value.

Caratunk's regulations allow homeowners to rent seasonally, ensuring that workforce housing for seasonal workers is available.

Since 2010, few seasonal homes have been converted to year-round use. Furthermore, the 2020 Community Survey revealed that 67% of non-resident respondents have no plans to convert to year-round use. Should any decide to stay year-round, the town would not incur a concerning financial burden; if anything, curbside trash pickup would increase by weight, but not at a disturbing cost.

The projected need for low and moderate income family, senior, or assisted living housing is extremely low in Caratunk.

Neither the Planning Board nor selectmen have had to address major housing issues in the community, such as substandard housing. Housing is affordable to those earning 80% of the median income. Again, there are no residents utilizing the General Assistance program.

8 Recreation

Caratunk is surrounded with year-round, outstanding recreational opportunities. Recreation is the very essence of our local economic well-being. To quote from Maine's recently-published 10-year Economic Development Strategy, *Maine also has thriving tourism, hospitality and outdoor recreation sectors that are critical to our economy. People who experience Maine come back for more – many as tourists, and some as residents. Showcasing Maine's beauty is part of our growth strategy.*

Recreational Resources

Caratunk benefits from nationally-recognized and widely-used natural resources.

The Town does not operate or contribute to any organized recreation programs, though individuals in town sometimes participate in public school sports, the Solon recreation department activities, or other organized forms of recreation. Area businesses also organize events that attract participants. The Town owns no land or access for recreation. All recreational assets are natural resources accessed through private landowners. None of Caratunk's recreational opportunities are affected by changes in age groups within the community. There are no Town-run or Town-owned facilities to upgrade or enlarge. There are no open space tracts which can be used for recreation, nor is there a related fund or trust.

Maine has a \$9 billion dollar tourism industry. It behooves Caratunk to leverage outdoor recreational assets to ensure its place as one of Maine's tourist destinations.

KENNEBEC RIVER and NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY

Route 201, paralleling the Kennebec and Dead rivers, has been designated as a National Scenic Byway. Old Canada Road Scenic Byway is one of only 120 such roads in the US. It's a historic route with natural and scenic features.

The Kennebec River, becoming Wyman Lake, forms the western boundary of the town. It is used as a corridor for the whitewater rafting companies, as well as public boating, kayaking and canoeing, fishing, and ice fishing. Access for the public is available at the Caratunk Boat Landing just south of the village, as well as several locations up and down the river. The Caratunk Boat Landing is owned by Brookfield Power and maintained by the Town which mows the grass, cleans portable restrooms, plows the driveway to access the dry hydrant, and put-in and take-out the dock each year. This popular spot has public portable restrooms and picnic tables in addition to a dock and boat launch. Brookfield also maintains (and charges for) camping sites at MacDougal Pond.

The **Kennebec River is a Class A River** according to the 1982 Maine Rivers Study.¹ The Study identified "**Class A" Rivers** as:²

¹
https://www.maine.gov/dep/gis/datamaps/lawb_maine_river_survey/pdf/1982MaineRiversStudy_FinalReport2011.pdf?sfns=mo

² Maine Rivers Study, p.9

1. *River or river segments possessing six resource values with regional, statewide or greater than statewide significance in a specific resource category.*
2. *Rivers or river segments possessing two or more resource values which are recognized to be some of the State's most significant in a given resource category. Included within this category are rivers providing important habitat (defined as self-sustaining viable runs or significant restoration efforts producing fishable populations) for the nationally significant Atlantic sea run salmon".*

RESOURCE VALUES³:

- *Geologic / Hydrologic Features*
- *River Related Critical / Ecologic Resources*
- *Undeveloped River Areas*
- *Scenic River Resources*
- *Historical River Resources*
- *Recreational River Resources*

Furthermore, in Section I, Item 5 of the Findings, **the Study stated that impacts of development around these river resources should be avoided or minimized.**

There is a significant base of citizen and public agency support for the conservation and sound management of the river resources of Maine.

*River conservation interests in the state vary widely. Such interests include recreational boating and fishing, commercial boating and fishing, education and scientific research, wildlife preservation, water quality maintenance, and miscellaneous recreational interests. While these interests vary and sometimes conflict, an underlying consensus exists that **rivers in their natural condition constitute a valuable resource to the State of Maine.** There also appears to be a consensus among river interests regarding which rivers are most important and warrant conservation action.*

*In addition, there appears to be a public recognition of the need to balance the goals of hydroelectric development and river conservation, and a desire for the use of hydropower where compatible with the resource values of a river and **where impacts of development are avoided or minimized.***

The Town of Caratunk should carefully weigh the findings of this study as it was intended for state agencies' deliberations. As can be seen below, the Kennebec and Dead Rivers were ranked at the highest classification of river resource value, and the state must ensure that these qualities are protected.

INTRODUCTION⁴

On June 22, 1981, Governor Brennan released the Energy Policy for the State of Maine. The hydropower section of the policy directed that:

"The Department of Conservation, working with environmental, economic, energy and other appropriate interests, should identify river stretches in the State that provide unique recreational opportunities or natural values and develop a strategy for the protection of these areas for submission to the Governor."

In response to this directive, and as a continuation of the State's ongoing efforts to conserve Maine's significant rivers, the Department of Conservation initiated the Maine Rivers Study. The U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service's Mid-Atlantic Office, as part of their ongoing river conservation technical assistance to the State, has provided staff to conduct this study.

³ Maine River Study, p. 8

⁴ Maine River Study, p. 13 (emphasis added)

The purpose of the study is two-fold. The first is to define a list of unique natural and recreation rivers, identifying and documenting important river related resource values as well as **ranking the State's rivers into categories of significance based on composite river resource value**. The second purpose of the study is to **identify a variety of actions that the State can initiate to manage, conserve, and where necessary, enhance the State's river resources in order to protect those qualities which have been identified as important**.

Appalachian Trail

The Appalachian Trail (AT) passes through Caratunk. The trail runs from Mt. Katahdin to Georgia, and traverses the northern half of Caratunk from East to West. It crosses the Kennebec River and Route 201 just above the village. Hikers navigate through a wooded area of Caratunk from Pleasant Pond and Pleasant Pond Mountain to reach the Appalachian Trail Ferry Service across the Kennebec River in Caratunk. The trail serves 2500-2800 hikers per year and provides access for local and regional day hikers. There are several other local trails, serving hikers, hunters, skiers, and snowmobilers. Because the AT is federal property, the Town is prohibited from making changes or improvements to the trail.

Pleasant Pond

Another outstanding recreational resource, though more of a local secret, is Pleasant Pond. Identified as a Great Pond (exceeds 10 acres), Pleasant Pond has excellent water quality, lending itself to high-quality boating and fishing opportunities. It is easily a contender as one of the cleanest body of water in the Maine. At 198 feet, it is the third deepest body of water in the State of Maine. Though the entire accessible frontage in Caratunk is privately owned, the public can access the pond via a boat landing. This landing is privately owned, however it is leased by the Pleasant Pond Protective Association which manages the access to the public and offers a concrete boat ramp, a small aluminum dock, temporary parking, and a portable restroom. There is also a primitive campsite on the east shore of the pond, on land owned by Weyerhaeuser. Near this campsite is a small, sandy beach accessible only by water. It's a popular site where one can view the Bigelow Mountains and an occasional moose in the bog behind the beach. In the winter, ice-fishing is a popular activity on Pleasant Pond.

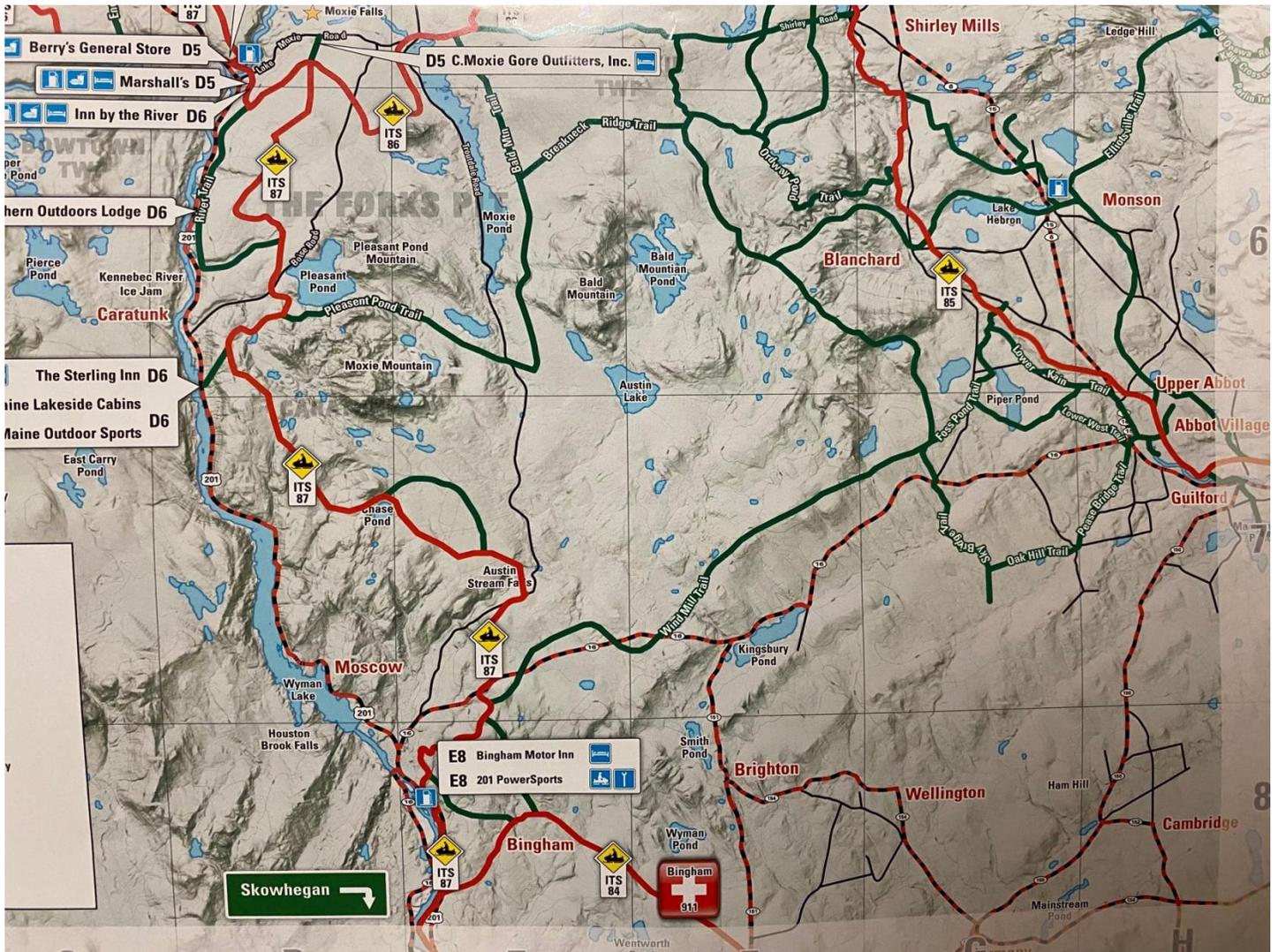
Remote Ponds & Exploration

The remainder of town holds an abundance of remote mountains and ponds, connected by a network of logging roads, trails, and streams. Some of the more frequent destinations are Log Landing Pond, Heald Ponds, Baker Pond, Dimmick Ponds, Moore's Bog, Cates Hill, and Moxie Mountain. Several of the remote ponds have primitive camp sites and boat landings, maintained by the timber companies.

Snowmobiling

A section of the Interconnecting Trail System (ITS) skirts south and west of Pleasant Pond and continues southeast on its way to Bingham and north towards The Forks, Greenville and Jackman. (See map section below) There are several outstanding snowmobile trails in Caratunk, one of which is the Pleasant Pond Trail, skirting around Pleasant Pond towards South Beach out through the Dimmicks towards Baker and Moxie ponds. The other section is ITS 87, which skirts around Moxie Mountain, Black Nubble and Cow Mountain, offering outstanding scenic views. There are several local tributaries, club, and side trails. While we have no local snowmobile club, thousands of riders from all over the country travel on Caratunk's snowmobile trails each year.

Cross country skiing is also a popular winter pastime. There are nearby trails and old logging roads that lend themselves to some leisurely skiing through the woods.



The Forks Area Snowmobile Trail Map

All Terrain Vehicles (ATV)

All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) have become a popular recreation activity of locals and tourists. Caratunk landowners/business owners oversee the Lake Moxie ATV Riders Club (LMAR) which covers The Forks, Moxie, Caratunk and part of Moscow. The map below shows the Caratunk trails. Basically there are two trails within Caratunk proper - one dead ends at Pleasant Pond north of the camps for local access only and the other trail connects to Bingham. This is the only access to and from Bingham. It should be noted that in 2019, American Forestry Management/ Weyerhaeuser closed this trail until an investment can be made to improve the trail.



The Town does not operate or contribute to any organized recreation programs, though individuals in town sometimes participate in SAD-related sports, Solon recreation department or other organized forms of recreation.

Recreational Development

The majority of businesses and workers in Caratunk serve the summer and/or winter tourist and recreationist. Four businesses operate only seasonally, and another four are heavily dependent on year-round, recreational tourism traffic.

Downeast/Adventure Bound

Open May-October; employs 20-25 seasonal FT; caters youth groups and families for rafting, camping, ropes course, rock climbing (indoor and outdoor), standup paddle boarding, hiking, canoeing, overnight remote camping

Maine Lakeside Cabins

Open year-round; Family run and operated with an additional 4 FT employees and 3 May-October; Lodging rentals; weddings and event center

Maine Outdoor Sports

Open year-round; 2 FT, 1 PT; Power sports rentals including canoes, kayaks, jet skis, ATVs and snowmobiles; guided or unguided; dependent on tourism industry

Sterling Inn/B&B

Open year-round; family run; catering to AT hikers, rafters, snowmobilers, hunters, tourists traveling to/from Quebec; completely dependent on the tourism industry

Caratunk House

AT hiking hostel; open May-October

ELC Outdoors

Seasonal; Whitewater rafting on the Kennebec and Dead; cabin rentals, 2 yurt rentals, canoe/kayak

and fat tire rentals

Kennebec River Angler

Fishing guide service on the Kennebec, Dead, Penobscot, remote ponds, lakes, streams; open April - October

Maine Guide Service, LLC

Family run; Appalachian Trail Kennebec River Ferry Service (guided), fishing, hunting, snowmobile, recreation guide service; year-round;

Grey's Outfitting

Birddog trainer and guided outfitting service; year-round; family run; birddog breeder and trainer

Pleasant Pond Inn

Lodging rental; year-round

Pleasant Pond is a recreation destination, hosting an inn, seasonal camps, four-season vacation homes, and several year-round residents.

Interest is growing in outdoor recreation as a form of tourism, particularly the brand known as "ecotourism." Caratunk is in a good position to benefit from this trend. We have as much "eco" as anyone. Caratunk needs to leverage the recreational opportunities to develop local or regional businesses or promotional efforts aimed at building our recreational clientele.

Most year-round residents derive their income in the tourism industry as independent guides or by working for the recreational outfitters, lodges, cabins and restaurants, area gas stations, etc. Other residents work as carpenters, roofers, woodsmen, and handymen catering to the needs of the area's landowners, both year-round and seasonal. However, most of Caratunk's landowners are seasonal and own vacation homes and camps along Pleasant Pond and the Kennebec River. Both positive and negative changes to recreational resources or uses thereof may impact Caratunk residents not only financially, but also in their quality of life. According to a recent survey of residents and non-residents, Caratunk was chosen for their permanent and/or seasonal homes because of the area's peace, scenic surroundings and for the recreational opportunities provided by its natural resources. The Town must protect nature's silence and serenity and nighttime stargazing, all of which have been impacted elsewhere in Maine by noise and light pollution. It is Caratunk's responsibility to safeguard these natural resources for future generations. These wilderness guide businesses and their families rely on the viability of the fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, hiking, ATV-ing, and whitewater activities as well as the strength and health of the fishery and wildlife population and habitat. Many of us have deep roots in Caratunk and understand their value. Those of us who lived through the demise of the Pleasant Pond brook trout fishing know what there is to lose.

Being so remote geographically, these residents specifically chose to acquire their lands for the scenic, peaceful and healthy attributes of a non-industrialized environment. Their livelihoods and ways of life (hunting for organic, free-range game) require this preserved, wild landscape. The very livelihoods of the residents in Somerset County, for example, are dependent on their natural landscapes to lure tourists traveling from industrialized settings to our non-industrialized settings.

The Town of Caratunk offers residents and visitors a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities, though not necessarily in the area of organized sports and developed facilities. Caratunk is highly dependent on the outdoor recreation industry.

Though there are many constraints to growth and development in Caratunk; the degree of recreational opportunity is not one of them. We need to leverage our recreational assets to support our vision of...*a peaceful and safe, small town community where year-round and seasonal residents enjoy an unmatched quality of life.*

9 Transportation

Goal

The Transportation objective of the Town is to plan for, finance, and oversee improvements to ensure that its 5.57 miles of road system is safe, well-constructed and maintained for residents and visitors. With no town highway department, all work must be contracted out. Despite major expenditures in 2019, the current condition of the Pleasant Pond Rd, West Shore Rd, and Main Street, as indicated in Table 9-1, will force the Town to commit an even greater portion of its budget to roadwork in the very near future. This will be impossible without financing as the town tax base is limited. With such a large percentage of property in Tree Growth, the burden of increased road expenses will fall mostly on residents and non-residents.

General

The road system of Caratunk represents its single largest asset, and routine road maintenance took up over 19% of our expenditures in 2019. This included outlays for specific projects, such as \$29,278 for the recent ditching and pavement repair work. The total 2019 road expenditures were \$81,480.54. The Town maintains no private roads. There are no municipal parking areas aside from the Town Office.

The selectmen act as road commissioners and also place road signs and postings.

There is no **public transportation** available in Caratunk or the surrounding towns. Given its extremely rural location, minimal number of residents, small tax base, land area zoned largely Conservation, Management and Resource Protection land, public transportation is not an applicable or reasonable objective for the Town. At this time, are no regional transit services, nor is there a request by residents.

There are no **sidewalks** in Caratunk because the roads are too narrow to accommodate sidewalks. Mill Street, School Street and W Shore Rd are barely wide enough for two-lane traffic for some or the entire roadway. There is no potential for improvement or changes as there are building structures in existence. There are no schools, stores, or walking destinations that require sidewalks. Pedestrians exercise, by bike or foot, and are forced to keep to the sides of the roads while vehicular traffic accommodates them.

Roads

Table 9-1 lists Caratunk’s roads with other information. Condition ratings were based on subjective evaluation. "ADT" is the average number of vehicles per day. The "Developed Areas Map" shows the location of the roads as well as other town facilities. The “condition” in Table 9-1 states the road condition during the horrendous 2020 winter frost-heave season after the contractor-forced second season of salt-only road treatment.

| Table 9-1 Caratunk Road Inventory | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|---|
| Road Name | Mileage | Surface | Condition | Remarks |
| Route 201 | 7.51 | paved | Very good | ADT 2230 (2018) State responsibility |
| Pleasant Pond Road | 3.24 | paved | Fair/good | heavy truck traffic, resurface patches 1-2 yrs |
| North Shore Road | .31 | paved | Good/fair | heavy truck traffic, |
| West Shore Road | .68 | paved | Very poor | Reconstruct in 1 years |
| Mill Street | .07 | paved | Very good | Narrow, short dead end; |

| | | | | |
|---------------|------|-------|-------------------------|---|
| | | | | only 2 homes |
| School Street | .07 | paved | Good/Fair | access to town office, former fire house |
| Main Street | 1.20 | paved | N- Fair S- Very poor | S- heavy truck traffic, reconstruct in 1 year |

The total comes to about 7.5 miles of state road and 5.57 miles of local responsibility. Route 201 is, of course, a principal arterial, associated with the National Highway System, so it can be expected to remain in excellent condition and under state maintenance. Additionally, Route 201 was designated a National Scenic Byway.

Pleasant Pond Road is the only link between the Caratunk village and the only other population center at Pleasant Pond. Maintaining this road in good condition is vital. Following the 1987 flood, the Town received federal emergency management funds for repairs and mitigation of potential future hazards. The Main Street Bridge was also repaired, leaving all public bridges in town in fair to good condition.

The town also contains a considerable inventory of private roads, the majority belonging to Weyerhaeuser or camp owners. The entire eastern 2/3 of town can only be accessed through these private roads.

Caratunk roads also receive considerable and significant traffic from residents and visitors to/from Moxie Pond and Pleasant Pond in The Forks, logging operations from the timber landowners in The Forks, day hikers of Pleasant Pond Mountain, etc.

The Forks residents at Pleasant Pond donated a significant sum of money to help defray the cost of having the Pleasant Pond Rd lined with a yellow center line to improve driver safety.

Maintenance

Winter maintenance is performed by a private contractor, currently in the fourth year of a five year contract with the town. Decades ago, the Town had contracted with DOT, however, the DOT is no longer an option. The private contract averages about \$42,000 per year (up from \$11,000 in 1998). Because of our remoteness, our choice of contractors is limited to only one.

The Town does not own any road equipment, and all summer maintenance is contracted out as needed. Summer maintenance usually consists of improvements to drainage (culverts and ditching) which ensures that pavement lifetime is extended. This includes proper management of storm water flow. Additionally, the Town contracts for crack sealing, pavement patches, roadside mowing, tree trimming, street sweeping, weed spraying, and line painting. The total cost for summer maintenance was about \$9,000 in 2019.

In 2008, the Town took out a six year municipal bond, from the Maine Municipal Bond Bank, to reconstruct and resurface only a portion of the 5.57 miles of local roads. Payments were completed in 2013. In 2019 after a long and damaging winter, it became readily apparent that West Shore Rd, part of Main Street and part of Pleasant Pond Rd would require immediate and excessive ditching for road draining followed by reconstruction in the next couple of years. However, as of January, 2020, the continued logging through Caratunk by the state harvesting for The Forks Public Lot (and accessing via Caratunk’s public lot, Pleasant Pond Rd and Main St.) and the contractor’s use of salt has brought Main Street, Pleasant Pond Rd and West Shore Rd into a state of crisis. Road construction should be taking place during the summer of 2020, however funding will not be available until 2021.

Regional Coordination

It is important to note that Caratunk works with neighboring towns and the Somerset County UTs whenever possible. Due to the rural, remote locations and low populations of Caratunk, The Forks, West Forks and the UT, the municipal governments work together to attain our plowing contractor (Caratunk, The Forks, UT), Transfer

Station (see below) and our latest mutual agreement, the DOT sand/salt shed. In 2017, the MeDEP informed the MeDOT that the sand/salt pile in the West Forks DOT lot need to be in a covered building. In 2018 and 2019, the DOT worked with The Forks, Caratunk, and Somerset County to construct a sand/salt Quonset Hut to house the sand/salt for the state and 3 local entities. The Caratunk entered into a lease agreement and received a DOT loan for this mutual project.

Concerns

Over the past thirty years, Caratunk's share of Local Road Assistance Program (LRAP) from the State has shrunk from \$20,000 to \$5,500. In 2019, the town raised from property taxation \$22,000 (up from \$5,000 in 1998), appropriated \$18,000 (up from \$5,000 in 1998) and appropriated \$13,500 (up from \$5,000 in 1998) in anticipated excise tax. There is a concern that, given the high cost of maintaining paved roads, the State is not contributing to these “State-Aid Roads”. In fact, it is laughable that these roads are even categorized “State-Aid Road” given the lack of state aid.

Conflicts with Multiple Road Use

Although there is no conflict with pass-through traffic on Route 201, there is definitely conflict with logging truck pass-through traffic from The Forks Plantation from the town line on North Shore Rd and through the Caratunk Public Lot onto Pleasant Pond Rd. Paper companies operating in The Forks enter Caratunk on private roads, entering the pavement on North Shore Rd causing wear and tear on our paved roads as they travel on North Shore Rd., Pleasant Pond Rd. and out Main Street onto Route 201. The greatest damage in the last 2 years was inflicted by the State harvesting The Forks Public Lot via Caratunk’s Public Lot and wrecking Pleasant Pond Rd and Main Street. The State never asked, never offered a road bond, used chains and destroyed Main St. S to the point they, and nearly all other traffic, even started taking Main St. N to drive South on Route 201.

Parking

With the Inland Fishery and Wildlife’s introduction of ice fishing on Pleasant Pond in 2010, Caratunk was forced to adopt a Parking Ordinance to prevent anglers parking on the road to access the pond (which has no wintertime public access). The roads are too narrow – especially with snow banks - for parking and traffic to flow. This became a public safety issue, and the ordinance was required to allow for emergency vehicles to access the roads.

In essence, there is no parking at all on Caratunk roads during the winter season, November 1-May 1. Additionally, there is no overnight parking on Caratunk roads from January 1-December 31. There is also no parking to impede the normal flow of traffic or to restrict access to driveways or emergency vehicles. As of Fall 2019, this ordinance will be enforced by the Somerset County Sheriff’s staff.

Subdivisions

There is currently a subdivision, Cates Hill Road, at the south end of Caratunk, bordering Moscow, and off of Route 201. The subdivision’s dirt road is owned and maintained by the 7 lot owners.

Traffic

There is insignificant traffic during most of the year. However, the seasonal residents arrive in more substantial numbers from Memorial Day through Labor Day, filtering out by Columbus Day. These are Caratunk residents as well as The Forks residents. During these months, there is also a higher volume of pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Safety Signage

The speed limits were reviewed in the last few years by a DOT engineer. Most speed limits are 25, 30 or 35mph. The Town maintains the signage. For safety, the town has painted speed limits on the pavement at the town line on North Shore Rd to encourage The Forks drivers to slow down. Additionally the Town has painted “STOP” at certain intersections.

Future Transportation Management

Due to the newly emerging crisis on the roads due to age, heavy trucking and salt the last two seasons, the pavement this winter is in the worst condition in decades. Assessment of the gravel base and final road condition after the frost leaves won't be able to transpire until May. The DOT engineer consulted with selectmen in January and will return late spring to help formulate a plan for the near future as well as a long term service maintenance plan. We will not be able to apply for a municipal bond until spring 2021 for paving to occur summer, 2021.

At the time of this writing, the Service Maintenance and Paving Plan is not available so the long term financial budget is not known. Otherwise, normal maintenance will remain consistent and the plowing contract has the same cost for the next 3 years.

During 2020 the Town, in consultation with the DOT, will determine the appropriate standards for design, construction and maintenance of the 5.57 miles of Caratunk roads.

The Transportation Data Set was not provided to Caratunk by the DOT.

10 Public Facilities and Services

A review of Caratunk's public facilities and services enables the town to prioritize its essential facilities and services that support the vision for the type of community we want to sustain. The following questions may provide guidance in this review.

- What are those that require long-term planning to avoid unexpected and exorbitant expenses?
- Which are nice to have vs. need to have and/or have the most positive impact on our quality of life?
- How can we operate in an efficient and cost effective manner and still meet the community's needs?
- What services and facilities require us to partner with other communities in the region?
- Are there alternate sources of funding that might be necessary?
- Are there pending mandates that will impact our public facilities and services?

Public Water/Sewer

There are no public water or sewer systems in Caratunk, nor is there a need to develop this infrastructure. There have been no requests from landowners. The lack of public sewer and water systems is not preventing the community from accommodating current or project growth. Landowners utilize either private drilled or dug wells. Over the years, landowners have installed septic tanks and assume the costs of maintaining them. The Code Enforcement Officer and Plumbing Inspector address issues that may arise from faulty septic systems. There are no known issues regarding septic waste at this time. Caratunk's stormwater management facilities consist of its road culverts and ditches. There is an ongoing effort to keep this infrastructure functioning properly.

Health Care Facilities and Social Services

The nearest health care facility and dentist are the Bingham Health Clinic in Bingham (23 miles) and the nearest hospital, the Redington-Fairview Hospital is in Skowhegan (43 miles). The pharmacy in Bingham closed in January 2020. Residents must either travel to Skowhegan to get prescriptions filled or order them by mail.

With regards to Maine's General Assistance program, the town has adopted the latest 2019 ordinance. The Town has never had a resident utilize these services, but they are available for the future.

Caratunk donates annually to a variety of organizations that provide social services.

- Bingham Area Senior Citizens
- Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County
- Family Violence Project
- Kennebec Behavioral Health
- Crisis & Counseling
- Lifeflight
- Red Cross
- St. Peter's Food Pantry, Bingham
- Child Advocacy Center

Education

Regional Coordination

Our largest annual expenditure is education. Caratunk closed its one-room school on School Street in 2003 and became Caratunk Public Schools when Caratunk's townspeople voted to withdraw from School Administrative District #13 (SAD #13). Two factors were instrumental in this decision – when the share of student population fell below 5% and the town's share of the district operating costs increased to 35% and when the district refused to change its funding formula. The Forks withdrew from the district in 1998 and West Forks withdrew in 2001. Subsequently, Caratunk was left with no alternative, but to withdraw. Since then, pupils residing in Caratunk have

been tuitioned to neighboring school districts, primarily to RSU/SAD #74 (Solon Elementary, Carrabec Community School and Carrabec High School. Residents have the option of sending their children to another school system. However, Caratunk will only pay for the tuition rate equal to or less than RSU/SAD #74 charges. Some residents have opted to send their children to either RSU 82/SAD 12 in Jackman or RSU #59 in Madison. Caratunk stopped providing a school bus in 2008 when only 2 students required transportation and the cost became prohibitive. The school board developed an alternative transportation plan. Families are responsible for their children's transportation to school and Caratunk provides reimbursement for mileage up to \$10,000 per family. There is \$40,000 budgeted for the 2020-2021 school year for transportation.

In October 2019, there were 8 subsidizable pupils residing in Caratunk plus 2 students who are homeschooled. Since 2010, the average number of subsidizable pupils residing in Caratunk is 3 pupils (source: ED279 reports publically available on the Maine DOE website). The town does not anticipate substantial variation in the number of pupils residing in town over the next ten years and, therefore, does not foresee the need for school construction.

From the Community Survey, 70% of respondents support the current education system. Comments on the survey include "rejoining SAD 13", "term limits for the local school board members", "joining with The Forks and West Forks and sending students to the Jackman system", and "going back to a bus instead of reimbursing parents or others for transportation costs". Each of the three school board members serve for three years; the terms are staggered. In the past, The Forks was not willing to transport a Caratunk student to Jackman, nor were they willing to transport a West Forks student. In 2020, the Caratunk superintendent did look into attaining a bus but found none available.

Solid Waste

Another major investment for the Town is our solid waste expense. In 2009, Caratunk townspeople voted to start curbside pickup in lieu of driving 20 miles to the Caratunk-Forks-West Forks (CFWF) landfill on Durgin Hill in the West Forks. The Town also placed a recycling canister at the Town Office for residents to utilize for aluminum, #1 and #2 plastic, glass, cardboard and newspaper/magazines. A demolition container is placed at the CFWF transfer station three weeks per year for residents to use free of charge. Any other time of year, residents can still bring demo to the station for a fee of 1.5 times the standard amount or metal for free. Every January, the Town mails landowners a large postcard detailing the solid waste opportunities for residents including a calendar of dates for curbside pickup (every two weeks except during summer months where it is picked up weekly), demolition dates, transfer station details and recycling requirements.

Due to summertime abuse of the recycling container for consecutive years, the Town was refused at the two available recycling centers. At the March, 2019 Annual Town Meeting, townspeople voted to start single-stream recycling in lieu of the only other option of discontinuing recycling altogether.

The curbside pickup, recycling and demo opportunities are meeting the current needs and reducing the waste disposal. If in future years, we find that demo containers are filling fast, more demo containers can be ordered. Currently, there are times when the demo containers are picked up not full.

Regional Coordination

The Caratunk-Forks-West Forks (CFWF) Transfer Station (formerly landfill) was a regional venture set up to receive municipal solid waste. This was a state-of-the-art, licensed landfill, with an estimated life of thirty years back in the 1990s. The Transfer Station is open two days a week. Although household waste is picked up curbside now, Caratunk residents can still access the transfer station to deposit demo, metal, and e-waste. The annual cost to Caratunk is approximately \$3,000, covering operations, engineering, monitoring, and an escrow fund for closure.

According to the Community Survey, 82% of respondents indicated satisfaction with the current system.

Favorable comments were made about the single-sort system now being used for recycling. Among the 18% who were unsatisfied, one asked for access to the CFWF transfer station (which residents have) and the other asked for more than 2 demo containers per year (there are 3). Both complaints reveal that these people are not carefully reading the Solid Waste Postcard which is mailed to each household annually. Another complained about curbside trash not being contained properly resulting in litter. Again, postcard instructions require landowners to use 30 gal containers with lids. Some seasonal landowners who leave Sundays complained that they have to make special arrangements for the Monday Curbside pickup; Rubbish removal contractors will not come on weekends. Then there were some unreasonable requests such as Caratunk have its own transfer station – which first we don't own land, and secondly our tax base could not fund it. One realistic request was for brush removal; the Town could look into this.

Fire Protection

Regional Coordination

From January 1, 2012, Caratunk's fire protection has been provided by the Bingham Fire Department in 2012. The building formerly known as the Caratunk Fire Station is located on School Street in the village. This vacated, single bay station house was built in the early 1980's. The townspeople voted to enlist Bingham's credited fire department upon finding out from the state Fire Marshall that none of the volunteers or equipment was certified.

The town has no fire equipment or vehicles since disbanding the Caratunk Volunteer Fire Department and severing its partnership with the West Forks Fire Department due to their lack of certification.

In November of 2014, two houses on Main Street burned to the ground. The excellent work of the Bingham, Solon and Jackman fire departments saved the rest of Main Street homes and structures but could not keep the two houses watered. The overwhelming prohibiting factor was the lack of flowing water. A temporary pool was set up in the middle of the street while tankers drove over a mile to the Kennebec River to refill. There was only one dry hydrant available in Caratunk and that was at the Caratunk Boat Landing.

In 2015, the Selectmen, with townspeople and DEP approval, applied for grants and successfully installed a dry hydrant and 6,000 gallon cistern which would be gravity-fed from Pleasant Pond Stream on Main Street.

In 2016, the Select Board, with townspeople and DEP approval, successfully installed a dry hydrant at Lathe's Landing on Pleasant Pond. This would be the first time that residences at Pleasant Pond would have a reliable source of water in the event of a structure fire. Prior to this hydrant installation, fire department water tankers would have to drive 5 miles from the Kennebec River hydrant (elevation 600ft) to Pleasant Pond (1200ft).

The Maine Forest Service has stationed a forest ranger and a Type 6 engine in Caratunk village. This base has equipment available to be used by the town in an emergency.

Although response time from Bingham, nearly twenty miles away, is less than ideal, 85.19% of Community Survey respondents indicated their satisfaction with the current arrangement.

Emergency and Health Services

Regional Coordination

Ambulance and Rescue Service is provided by the Upper Kennebec Valley Ambulance Service, which serves the towns of Bingham, Moscow, Somerset County UTs, Caratunk, Pleasant Ridge, West Forks, and The Forks. The service purchased a new ambulance in 1995. Caratunk generally pays about 5 percent of the costs of the service, and averages 9 calls per year (up from 3-4 in 1998).

There are two EMTs who live in the area. In addition, the rafting companies have employees with advanced first aid and First Responder training. The nearest hospital is Redington-Fairview Hospital in Skowhegan, which is fairly convenient. All doctor and other medical services are generally available in Skowhegan.

Periodically, Caratunk receives information from public health agencies such as Somerset Heart Health and Somerset Public Health agencies and makes this information available at the town office and on the public bulletin board outside the US Post Office.

According to the Community Survey results, Caratunk supports the Upper Kennebec Valley Ambulance Service. 100% of respondents favor this arrangement.

Public Safety

Regional Coordination

Caratunk has no constable. Caratunk police coverage is shared by county and state personnel. The nearest State Police barracks is in Skowhegan, as is the Somerset County Sheriff's Office. There is concern about the availability of protection due to the distance involved. There is currently a state police officer and county deputy residing on Main Street.

As of 2019, the Somerset County Sheriff department possesses Caratunk tickets which can be implemented for violations to the Town of Caratunk Parking Ordinance.

The Town participates in the 911-enhanced program. This has involved locating each structure in town and assigning a street address to it. Our street lighting system consists of 33 streetlights. The town pays the charges, which amount to over \$5,800 per year (a 16% increase from 1998). The Select Board has started the process of looking into converting the street lights to LEDs.

Municipal Operations

For the most part, municipal functions are not carried out in a central location. Some records and most town business are transacted over the phone in the homes of respective local officials -- town clerk, selectmen, tax collector, etc. The Town Office is a meeting place for the selectmen, Planning Board, and tax collector (for registrations). Town meetings and public hearings are also held in the Town Office.

In 1998 when the Caratunk Elementary School was in operation, there was a need for a dedicated town office. In 2003, the schoolhouse was converted into a town office, thus eliminating the need for a new building.

In addition to selectmen (who are also assessors/overseers), elected positions include the town clerk, treasurer, tax collector, and school board members. The Select Board appoints the Planning Board, code enforcement officer, animal control officer, registrar and local plumbing inspector. These positions are paid by the town biannually with the exception of school board members who are paid by the meeting. The town contracts out for all other services including roadwork and maintenance of lands and facilities.

The Annual Town Meeting, held on a Monday in March, provides voters with the opportunity and responsibility to voice opinions and vote on various town matters. Acted upon at the Town Meeting are articles pertaining to appropriation of money through taxation or other means, local proposed ordinance changes, highest interest rates, contract agreements, election of officers and board members, the disposal of real estate, property tax levy limits, the acceptance of funds coming into the Town and other items presented at the meeting as specified in the town warrant.

Recreation

Outdoor recreation is an important facet of life in Caratunk. Recreation and recreational facilities are more than just a local public service concern; Recreation/tourism is the principal mover of the economy. Both of these aspects are addressed in Chapter 8.

Telecommunications

Land lines are offered by Consolidated Communications. Electricity is delivered by Central Maine Power. Cable is not offered in Caratunk or the region. Television is available through a satellite company or through Wi-Fi via DSL. Caratunk does have DSL through the Land line phone service. Due to a national initiative, AT&T is in the process of installing a cell tower in between Route 201 and the Pleasant Pond Rd. Caratunk anticipates that residents at the Pond and in the village will soon have cell service. The intention of the tower was to eliminate a dead zone between Moscow's tower and the West Forks' tower. The tower should be fully operational in 2020. The town needs to support the goal of the state's ConnectME plan to ensure high-speed connectivity throughout Caratunk.

Energy

There is currently an electrical corridor carrying Maine ratepayer electricity from the Kennebec River Harris Station hydro-facility on the north-west border of the town along Moxie Lake. Caratunk, however, receives its power from the Bingham area. There are no wind towers in Caratunk as Caratunk adopted the Caratunk Wind Ordinance in 2011. There is no solar farm in Caratunk, although energy companies have proposed solar farms at the former United States Air Force Radar Station which borders Caratunk and Moscow. The Town has been under an Electrical Transmission Corridor Moratorium while the Planning Board designs the Caratunk Energy Systems Ordinance. This ordinance is a combination of Wind, Solar and Electrical Transmission, is under legal review and should be up for hearing and vote prior to the April 25, 2020 deadline.

The only three-phase power available in Caratunk is along Route 201.

Library

Regional Coordination

The Town used to make an annual contribution to the Bingham Union Library. However, since more Caratunk school students are now using the Solon school system and Solon Coolidge Library, Caratunk now contributes to that library, and Caratunk residents are permitted to patronize it. Additionally, the Pleasant Pond Library, open to all residents, is located on the Bateman Farmhouse property, at the intersection of W Shore Rd., N. Shore Rd, and the Pleasant Pond Rd. The Pleasant Pond Library is volunteer-run, unmanned, and supplied by donations.

Town Lands and Buildings

The Town owns very little developed property, simply the Fire House and Town Office, both on School Street. The Kennebec River Boat Landing is owned by a third party and simply maintained by the Town. The Fire House is a vacant building (circa 1980) with electricity only; there is no anticipated plan for the building, unless the town decides to discontinue contracting for winter road maintenance. Should that occur, the building presents the possibility of housing a town plow vehicle. The Town Office, formerly the Caratunk Elementary School built in 1948, has one large room, a small office, and a restroom. The building is utilized for corporate meetings, elections, tax collector transactions, etc. Over the recent years, the building was renovated for mold removal, completely stripped of school associated items, installed with an air cleansing system, repainted inside, roof insulated, and floor refinished. There is no anticipation of changing the use of this building.

Most officers work out of their homes via phone and computers. The Town Office holds nearly all town documents with the exception of those documents used daily by the First Selectman or Tax Collector/Treasurer. There is a need for a fire vault to store records.

In contrast are the "public lots," three parcels scattered through town totaling over 1,000 acres. These woodlots yield some revenue from time to time when the state performs logging operations and distributes a portion of the profit to the Town. These lots also provide undeveloped recreation opportunities.

The town contracts out for mowing around the town office, cemeteries and boat landing.

Cemeteries

The town maintains two cemeteries, the Moore Family Cemetery, located on the southern end of the village (Main Street), and the Webster Cemetery, located south of town on Route 201. The cemeteries are administered by the Select Board, and maintenance, historically was funded by a combination of municipal appropriations and interest from a cemetery trust fund (which is down to the principal amount). Currently, only \$13,900 in principal remains in the trust fund. The town now funds all cemetery maintenance expenses since receiving a legal opinion regarding the use of the principal of the trust fund. We hope this issue can be resolved in a manner which frees up a portion of the principal for its intended purpose.

In the late 1980's, Caratunk entered into a land exchange with CMP for a parcel adjacent to Webster Cemetery for future use. The parcel was in exchange for relinquishing the north access to the cemetery. The parcel has been mapped, but no plot purchases have been made.

Street Tree

Caratunk has no "street tree program".

Fiscal Operations

Table 10-1, on the following page, outlines Caratunk's fiscal history from 2013 to 2018. The information presented is taken from town Audit Reports and State Valuation Returns. However, it should be noted that the audit report may be inconsistent as the town's long-term auditor retired in 2015, and the new auditor started in 2016. Each general expenditure category is tracked for percentage of total budget and percent growth from the prior year (the "% incr." column).

The Town has voted to increase the property tax levy limit since the inception of LD-1. In addition to our other commitments, we, as a community, continue to demonstrate the value of our young students' education by annually raising more taxes than required by the Essential Programs and Services funding limit set by state mandate. As a result, our young people are provided with educational, social, cultural and athletic experiences that we would not be able to provide locally, particularly if the town adhered to the LD-1 guideline.

This table allows us to see the results of shifts in individual expenditures. Special Assessments (county tax and education) increased significantly due to ever-increasing county tax assessments and additional students in the school system. 2015 also saw the introduction of a Child Enrichment Program (in lieu of a recreation department) to reimburse students up to \$1,500 per year; the program reimbursed for dance lessons, ski lessons, learn-to-swim programs, drama and travel expenses.

The road expense budget increased because of tree trimming in 2015, frequent drainage and culvert work, and changes in plowing contractors in 2015 and 2018, where both contracts resulted in significant spending increases. The 2017 road expenses increased as a result of the severe wind storm disaster on October 31, 2017 and required FEMA relief which was received in 2018. Fortunately, these large expenditures did not impact the mil rate, but the town should consider budgeting strategies for long term projects and unanticipated expenses in the future to avoid an undue burden on taxpayers. The auditor's public works value for 2015 is not consistent with town records and is believed to be in error. We expect budgets to increase over time, and since our road infrastructure is a major portion of the budgeting process, thoughtful analysis of existing conditions with responsible planning and financing to ensure a sustainable road infrastructure is critical.

Expenses in the category of "Health and Sanitation" have remained consistent with a disposal company performing curbside pickup, a recycling container stationed at the town office, and a demo container located at CFWF. Additionally, expenses for solid waste disposal were partially offset by a state reimbursement for closure of the regional landfill, CFWF.

"Public Safety" expenses have remained consistent and should remain stable as long as we utilize Bingham Fire Department for fire protection. In 2019, the Somerset County Sheriff's Department agreed to police our roads and enforce the parking ordinances as the Town has no constable. There was an exception in "Public Safety" expenses in 2016 when there was a marked increase due to the installation of dry hydrants at Pleasant Pond and on Main Street; the latter also received fire cisterns which are filled from Pleasant Pond Stream. These hydrants and cisterns were approved by townspeople after a major house fire in November, 2014 that threatened several Main Street residences and the US Post Office. Two grants were received to help defray costs for these two installations, and the Kennebec River hydrant overhaul was funded by Brookfield Power in 2017.

The mil rate has gone up due to an increase in road expenses, education expenses, county tax increases, and because revenues and reimbursements from state sources were reduced during the past decade. The mil rate was noticeably higher in 2013 even though the final payment on the 2008 municipal bond for paving roads had just been made, and the general fund needed to be built up.

From 2013-2018, the town's general fund balance has more than tripled in these 6 years. The ending fund balance in 2013 was \$94,477.04, and in 2018, the account finished with \$328,578.45 for a **348% increase**. As just mentioned, with the municipal bond paid off in 2013, the Select Board worked at building up the general fund without increasing the mil rate in a burdensome way.

In 2014, there was a town-wide revaluation by a licensed assessor.

The Community Survey results indicate a preference for development along the 201 Corridor and the village area as opposed to development at Pleasant Pond or in remote areas of Caratunk. Currently, the town does not expect any significant increases in expenses for the Town Office or Fire House with the exception of the furnace which will soon need replacement. Given the few town-owned facilities and heavy reliance on contracted services, financial increases are anticipated in contracted services. Unfortunately, inflation is expected.

Table 10-1

| | 2018 | | | 2017 | | | 2016 | | |
|---------------------|------------------|------------|------------|------------------|------------|-------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| | Expenditure | % of Total | % Increase | Expenditure | % of Total | % Increase | Expenditure | % of Total | % Increase |
| General Govt. | \$62,029 | 18% | 110% | \$56,167 | 16% | 89% | \$63,003 | 18% | 98% |
| Public Safety | \$28,060 | 8% | 103% | \$27,297 | 8% | 50% | \$54,847 | 16% | 206% |
| Health/Sanit | \$27,848 | 8% | 106% | \$26,301 | 8% | 100% | \$26,372 | 8% | 102% |
| Public Works | \$47,500 | 14% | 81% | \$58,312 | 17% | 123% | \$47,472 | 14% | 42% |
| Special Assess. | \$182,401 | 52% | 118% | \$153,973 | 44% | 97% | \$159,101 | 45% | 154% |
| Cemet/unclass | \$2,757 | 1% | 141% | \$1,950 | 1% | 41% | \$4,762 | 1% | 98% |
| Total | \$350,595 | | | \$324,000 | | | \$355,557 | | |
| | \$38,845,75 | | | | | | | | |
| Total Valuation | 3 | | | \$38,523,059 | | | \$38,426,320 | | |
| Mil Rate | 0.085 | | | 0.0074 | | | 0.0072 | | |
| Assessment | \$328,319 | | | \$283,361 | | | \$275,422 | | |
| | \$37,450,00 | | | | | | | | |
| State Valuation | 0 | | 2.74% | \$36,450,000 | | -0.27% | \$36,550,000 | | 20.83% |
| Full Value Mil | 0.00877 | | | 0.00777 | | | 0.00754 | | |
| Ending Fund Balance | \$ 328,578.45 | | 142.2% | \$ 231,035.64 | | 109.2% | \$ 11,488.53 | | 97.30% |
| | 2015 | | | 2014 | | | 2013 | | |
| | Expenditure | % of Total | % Increase | Expenditure | % of Total | % increase | Expenditure | % of Total | |
| General Govt. | \$64,207 | 18% | 97% | \$66,454 | 19% | 111% | \$60,071 | 17% | |
| Public Safety | \$26,678 | 8% | 112% | \$23,745 | 7% | 83% | \$28,561 | 8% | |
| Health/Sanit | \$25,756 | 7% | 97% | \$26,443 | 8% | 123% | \$21,461 | 6% | |
| Public Works | \$111,985 | 32% | 221% | \$50,694 | 14% | 165% | \$30,700 | 9% | |
| Special Assess. | \$103,009 | 29% | 101% | \$102,439 | 29% | 110% | \$92,982 | 27% | |
| Interest LT debt | | | | | | | \$2,388 | | |
| Depreciation | | | | | | | \$56,967 | | |
| Cemet/unclass | \$4,843 | 1% | 122% | \$3,971 | 1% | 32% | \$12,590 | 4% | |
| Total | \$336,478 | | | \$273,747 | | | \$305,720 | | |
| | \$37,060,60 | | | | | town | | | |
| Total Valuation | 6 | | | \$36,862,897 | | revaluation | \$28,603,454 | | |
| Mil Rate | 0.0068 | | | 0.0064 | | | 0.0098 | | |
| Assessment | \$251,196 | | | \$234,647 | | | \$277,799 | | |
| | \$30,250,00 | | | | | | | | |
| State Valuation | 0 | | 0.17% | \$30,200,000 | | 1.85% | \$29,650,000 | | |
| Full Value Mil | 0.00830 | | | 0.00777 | | | 0.00937 | | |
| Ending Fund Balance | \$217,365 | | 119.6% | \$181,724 | | 192.3% | \$ 94,477.04 | | |

348%

Table 10-2 shows that we can't always be counting on tax base growth to keep the tax rate down. Note that the highest tax rates on the table are Bingham and Athens, which also have the highest valuations. The two lowest mil rates belong to Caratunk and The Forks, which have the lowest tax bases.

| | Total <u>Valuation Base</u> | State <u>Valuation</u> | Tax <u>Commitment</u> | <u>Mil Rate</u> |
|-----------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Caratunk | \$38,523,059 | \$36,450,000 | \$283,361.24 | 0.0074 |
| The Forks | \$47,871,768 | \$47,700,000 | \$464,686.64 | 0.00975 |
| Cornville | \$72,914,300 | \$86,850,000 | \$1,198,517.00 | 0.017 |
| Athens | \$79,003,338 | \$70,050,000 | \$1,193,895.93 | 0.01825 |
| Bingham | \$133,398,929 | \$58,350,000 | \$2,090,967.26 | 0.016 |

Source: Maine Revenue Services

Another means of looking at the impact of local taxes is to look at it by household. Taxes on the average home (home values obtained from the 1990 and 1980 census) have gone up everywhere. Nevertheless, so have property values and inflation. In fact, inflation accounted for a 60 percent rise during the 1980's. Since the property tax on the average home in Caratunk went from \$318 to \$446, a rise of only 40 percent, it means that after inflation taxes were lower in 1990 than in 1980.

The conclusions of these figures are that we do have the capacity to increase local assessments without creating additional burden on taxpayers, but we can't rely on increased tax base to provide us the revenue to take on needed projects.

Findings

With a population of under 100 residents, Caratunk has responsibility for a relatively small system of public facilities. We must strategically plan for the future in order for our budget to reflect our vision and our history of being fiscally responsible.

Whenever possible, the town partners with the state, county and nearby towns/plantations to minimize the cost while maintaining quality of large undertakings such as fire protection, ambulance service, salt/sand storage and a common transfer station. In each of these ongoing cooperative efforts, Caratunk continues to recognize the importance of partnerships to ensure we are the community embodied in our vision in a cost effective manner.

11 Fiscal Investment and Capital Investment Plan

A Capital Investment Plan is a strategy for dealing future expenses and potential "budget busters," those big-ticket items that can double a municipal budget in one year. It has been shown that by planning ahead, we can not only predict when those expenditures will arrive, we can minimize their cost by taking advantage of grant opportunities, windfall income, or possible regional cooperation. Although there is no guarantee, anticipation of major future expenses, together with thoughtful analysis and careful planning, should make the budgeting process easier.

The town has historically had several means of paying for capital improvements. The only non-tax source is the Revenue Fund from sale of timber off the public lot. Otherwise, local taxes usually pay the way. For small costs, we generally have paid out of annual appropriations. For larger ones, when we can foresee them, we establish a dedicated reserve fund, for example the set-aside for closing the landfill. We have also in the past been able to find private, state or federal grants to pay for needed projects.

We do not anticipate this blend of methods to change much in the future. We do, however, expect our list of needs to grow substantially. If we are going to continue to fund capital improvements as we have in the past, we are going to have to get better at it. We will have to identify and estimate major expenditures early, to give us time to save and prepare. We will have to keep up on grant opportunities. In the event that grant or bond opportunities arise, we should have some projects ready-to-go.

Table 11-1 lays out our needs large and small for the foreseeable future, our priorities, and how we expect to pay for them. Many of these items are related to paving and future maintenance of our 5.57 miles of roads. Although these are state-aid roads, the state contribution is only \$5500 per year, down from \$20,000 years ago before the state changed the formula. Therefore, the state hardly helps the town. Due to the newly emerging crisis on the roads due to age, heavy trucking and salt the last two seasons, the pavement this winter suffered extensive deterioration. Assessment of the gravel base and final road condition after the frost leaves won't be able to transpire until May. The DOT expert consulted with Selectmen in January and will return late spring to help construct a plan for the near future as well as a long term service maintenance plan. We will not be able to apply for a municipal bond until spring 2021 for paving to occur summer, 2021.

The Select Board should adopt this table as a guide and update it when new information is available. Unlike in 1998, this table is void of large capital requirements for schools and fire because we contract out for those departments. Roads, the town office, former fire house and the 3 dry hydrants are the town's only infrastructure. Fortunately, the General Fund is well supplied with roughly \$240,000 uncommitted funds to close 2019.

Table 11-1: Capital Investment Guide

| Capital Item | Priority | Expected | |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|---------------|
| | | Cost | Funding |
| Town Office Furnace | Med High | \$5,000 | local |
| W Shore Rd Paving | High | tbd | Bond |
| N Shore Rd 2 patches | Medium | tbd | Bond |
| Pleasant Pond Rd Paving | High | tbd | Bond |
| Main Street S Paving | High | tbd | Bond |
| Main Street N Paving | Medium | tbd | Bond |
| Future Rd surface maintenance | Low | tbd | Grants, local |

12 Current Land Use Plan

Our current means of managing land use and development is accomplished through Caratunk's Land Use Ordinance, which has been amended several times from its original form as a LURC-imposed ordinance. Caratunk's comprehensive Land Use Ordinance incorporates the State of Maine's shoreland zoning standards, sub-division standards, site plan review, zoning ordinances and floodplain management and works in conjunction with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) has been indispensable in working with Caratunk in compiling, updating and amending Caratunk's Land Use Ordinance and Wind Power Ordinance since 2009.

The purposes of Caratunk's Land Use Ordinance are to promote, protect, and facilitate the health, safety, and general welfare of the Caratunk residents; to prevent and control pollution; to protect fish spawning grounds, aquatic life, bird and other wildlife habitat; to protect freshwater wetlands; to protect buildings and lands from flooding and accelerated erosion; to protect archaeological, historic and cultural resources; to control building sites, placement of structures and land uses; to assure that a minimal level of services and facilities are available to the residents of Caratunk; to conserve shore cover, and visual as well as actual points of access to inland waters; to conserve natural beauty and open space; to anticipate and respond to the impacts of development; and to assure that new development meets the goals and conforms to the policies of the Town of Caratunk Comprehensive Plan.

The current Land Use Map is attached to this report. See Appendix C.

In 2009, wholesale changes were made to the ordinance. In 2012, amendments were added. The changes:

- identified areas to encourage growth and areas to discourage it, particularly with regard to protecting major travel corridors from overdevelopment;
- reviewed which uses are permitted and conditional, and the dimensional requirements in the individual districts;
- adopted the state Shoreland Zoning model;
- updated and expanded the general regulations to prepare for more modern forms of development and technological advances.
- incorporated state sub-division standards

All of the development from the past 10 years has occurred in existing developed areas. There have been no requests for development in other areas or undeveloped areas. In 2006, a large tract of forest land off Route 201 (abutting the Moscow town line) was sold, and a subdivision created. However, nearly all of this land remained in the Tree Growth Program.

It should be noted that Caratunk's Planning Board is governed by other municipal ordinances as well. With the assistance of the Maine Municipal Association (MMA), Caratunk has enacted:

- Special Amusement Ordinance
- Solid Waste Ordinance
- Parking Ordinance
- Marijuana Ordinance

Current Lot Dimensional Standards

| Standard | District | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----|-----|-----|--------|-----|
| | RP | SP | CD | MD | RD | GD |
| Minimum Side setback (feet) | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 10 | 10 |
| Minimum Rear setback (feet) | 15 | 15 | 15 | 15 | 10 | 10 |
| Minimum Shore frontage (feet) | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| Minimum Shore setback ⁵ (feet) | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Maximum building height ⁶ (feet) | 25 | 25 | 25 | 35 | 35 | 35 |
| Maximum impervious area | 5% | 5% | 10% | 10% | 20% | 50% |
| Minimum setback from Town Road Centerline ⁷ (feet) | - | - | - | - | 30 | - |
| Minimum setback from State Road Centerline (feet) ³ | - | - | - | - | 75 | - |
| Minimum Lot Size (Square feet) | - | - | - | - | 40,000 | - |

Town Map with Lots

Appendix B shows the town maps, updated in 2018. Within the last ten years, there are have been very few new structures or new lots in previously undeveloped areas. Most builds have been rebuilds, improvements, additions or a new structure in an existing lot. The US Census has no new housing units from 2000 to 2015; however, we know of several homes constructed during that period.

Description of Land Use Districts

A description of the districts in the current ordinance follows:

A. Resource Protection District.

The Resource Protection District includes areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or scenic and natural values. This district shall include the following areas when they occur within the limits of the Shoreland Zone, exclusive of the Stream Protection District:

- (1) Areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of freshwater wetlands and wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers, which are:
 - a. rated "moderate" or "high" value waterfowl and wading bird habitat, including nesting and feeding areas, by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) that are depicted on a Geographic Information System (GIS) data layer maintained by IF&W as of May 1, 2006.

⁵ All waterbody setbacks are measured from the normal high-water line and for wetlands from the upland edge.

⁶ Does not apply to chimneys, telecommunication facilities, wind energy developments and agricultural structures.

⁷ Variances are allowed where setbacks are impractical.

For the purposes of this paragraph “wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers” shall mean areas characterized by non-forested wetland vegetation and hydric soils that are contiguous with a great pond or river, and have a surface elevation at or below the water level of the great pond or river during the period of normal high water. “Wetlands associated with great ponds or rivers” are considered to be part of that great pond or river.

- (2) Floodplains along rivers and floodplains along artificially formed great ponds along rivers, defined by the 100 year floodplain as designated on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps or Flood Hazard Boundary Maps, or the flood of record, or in the absence of these, by soil types identified as recent floodplain soils.
- (3) Areas of two or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes of 20% or greater.
- (4) Areas of 2 or more contiguous acres supporting wetland vegetation and hydric soils, which are not part of a freshwater wetland as defined, and which are not surficially connected to a water body during the period of normal high water.
- (5) Land areas along rivers subject to severe bank erosion, undercutting, or river bed movement.

B. Stream Protection District.

The Stream Protection District includes all land areas within 75 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a stream, exclusive of those areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a great pond, or river, or within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of a wetland. Where a stream and its associated shoreland area are located within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the above water bodies or wetlands, that land area shall be regulated under the terms of the shoreland district associated with that water body or wetland.

C. Conservation District.

The Conservation District provides a layer of ecological protection against those land uses that may adversely affect natural resources. The Conservation District includes the following land areas, exclusive of the Resource Protection and Stream Protection Districts, as defined above:

- (1) Areas within 250 feet of all water bodies, unless designated as another district.
- (2) Areas rated “moderate” or “high” value deer wintering areas and travel corridors as defined by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) that are depicted on a Geographic Information System (GIS) data layer maintained by IF&W as of May 1, 2006.
- (3) Habitat for species appearing on the official state or federal lists of endangered or threatened species.
- (4) Areas above 2,700 feet in elevation from mean sea level.

D. Management District.

The Management District provides for some residential and recreational development while promoting forestry and other agricultural activities.

E. Residential District.

The Residential District comprises the area where existing residential development is concentrated and where future residential development is desired.

F. General Development District.

The General Development District comprises those areas with the highest existing development density, and where future mixed commercial, residential and public development is desired.

The following table lists the changes made to the Land Use Ordinance as requested in the Comprehensive Plan (1998 Revision):

| Table 12-1 Land Use Progress: Goals and Action Items | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Action Item | Status |
| Formal application procedure for Planning Board review of subdivisions and commercial development | Completed; Subdivision Ordinance |
| General standards in regulations: noise, outdoor lighting, phosphorous control road construction for development roads, etc. for modern forms of development | Completed |
| Groundwater protection from use/storage of toxic chemicals and potential pollutants for new development by groundwater aquifer (Rte. 201) | Not completed |
| Table showing allowed, conditional or prohibited uses within each district | Completed |
| Table showing additional requirements for each district: lot size, frontage, setbacks, structure height | Completed |
| Determine if commercial/industrial district is still necessary; Determine whether additional general regulations on commercial development make it feasible to permit industrial development throughout the general development district | Completed |
| Reconsider permitting single family houses in the management and conservation districts. Add a Resource Protection district where houses are prohibited and to ensure resource protection. | Completed |
| Move all high elevation(>1500ft) slopes from Management to Conservation | Completed |
| Change the general development district boundaries to reflect land that is actually developable. (Route 201 Corridor) | Not completed |
| Reclassified and added resource protection and stream protection | Completed |
| Reclassified commercial industrial to “general” | Completed |

The Town has strengthened its Land Use Ordinance by taking the following steps in a further attempt to offer more protection:

1. Minimum lot size is now 40,000sqft in all districts (state minimum)
2. Increased Resource Protection district and added Stream Protect district
3. Timber Harvesting is now under the Department of Conservation
4. More clearly defined land use and lot standards – tables have been added and are updated as needed.
5. In 2011, the Wind Energy Ordinance was added to set standards for this development.
6. In 2012, a subdivision ordinance was incorporated into the land use ordinance.

Future Projections

There is little anticipation for residential, institutional, commercial or industrial development, and therefore, there is no need for land to accommodate such projects. Caratunk's topography is not conducive to large-scale development. There is potential for land to be removed from the Tree Growth Program and developed, however, this would require re-zoning. Rezoning has the potential to conflict with... sustain[ing] and protect[ing] our natural scenic beauty and recreational opportunities ...as noted in our vision. The townspeople have reaffirmed that retaining the scenic landscape and town character is their goal. Respondents of the 2020 Community Survey indicated their time in Caratunk is chosen for: scenic beauty (36%), small town atmosphere (8%), recreation (42%), and work opportunity (2%).

70% of the 2020 Community Survey respondents are opposed to large scale industrial development, whereas 16% would not oppose it if located away from water resources, scenic or significant wildlife areas and also met ordinance requirements. When asked to rate the importance of factors to consider before approving the placement of large industrial development consideration for wildlife and scenic beauty were equally rated the most important(83.02%), followed by noise(75.47%), recreation and public safety(64.15%), health risks(52.83%), road wear and traffic(45.28%). Respondents gave tax revenue the lowest rating(32.08%).

Future Land Use Plan

Goal

Caratunk's Future Land Use Plan will continue along the same path as the Existing Land Use Plan which has been consistent with the community's vision and controlled by ordinances enacted by Caratunk's registered voters. The 2020 Community Survey confirms overwhelming support from year-round and seasonal residents for preserving Caratunk's rural and scenic character must be preserved. Therefore, this is the goal of the Future Land Use Plan.

Growth Areas

Although growth is encouraged, Caratunk has limited availability of developable land. Please see **Caratunk Land Use Map (Appendix C)**. Limitations are mainly due topography given the steep terrain and water resources. Much of Caratunk is zoned as either Resource Protection, Stream Protection, or Conservation District; however, the overwhelming majority of Caratunk land is in the Management District. Development is prohibited, further restricted or limited, and sometimes not encouraged in these zones. Development is encouraged in the Residential and General Development zones. These areas are limited not only to available land, but also to access by Caratunk's roads and Route 201.

Much of the current Land Use Ordinance has been driven by Caratunk residents in their desire to maintain the character of Caratunk. According to the results of the 2020 Community Survey, when asked what factors should be considered before allowing future residential or commercial development, respondents rated the following:

- maintaining town character 82.35%
- noise-68.63%
- traffic- 64.71%
- public safety-62.75%
- road wear and tear-50.98%
- protection of water resources-45.1%

When respondents were offered several potential location options for **future residential development**, they favored the following:

- the village area 45.1%
- Route 201 Corridor 39.22%
- along Pleasant Pond Rd. 13.73%
- residential development at Pleasant Pond 1.96%

When asked where to choose the best location for **future commercial development**, respondents chose the following:

- 92.31% the 201 corridor
- 5.77% selected the village area
- 1.92% chose the Pleasant Pond area.

Therefore, in determining Growth Areas, please see the following assessments along with the **Caratunk Tax Maps (Appendix B)**.

Much of the **Main Street** village area, which is zoned Residential, is already thickly settled with the exception of ¼ mile of undeveloped land. There is an abundance of privately owned, excess acreage northeast of Main Street south; this acreage is zoned Management District and is not conducive to development.

Some of Caratunk's **Route 201 Corridor** is zoned General Development, only where the terrain allows for development. The remainder of Caratunk's 201 Corridor is in Management District Zone with much of the privately owned, large land tracts under the Tree Growth Program.

Caratunk's largest landowner, Weyerhaeuser, owns the majority of the land in and around the vast water resources; thus this land is zoned in Management District, Stream Protection, and Resource Protection.

Pleasant Pond lands are zoned Residential only along North Shore and West Shore roads and the Fish Hatchery Rd, where the heaviest development has already occurred. There are a few developable acres across the street from the pond on North Shore Rd. Additionally, a family at the end of Fish Hatchery Rd. owns 2,595 feet of Pleasant Pond shore frontage, zoned Residential with the back acreage zoned Management District. (However, due to current Subdivision Laws, the subdivision of lots in the Management District is limited to every 5 years). All the remaining shore frontage and acreage around Pleasant Pond extending to The Forks Plantation is zoned Resource Protection and owned by Weyerhaeuser.

Much of the **Pleasant Pond Rd** parallels Pleasant Pond Stream, and therefore, development is limited due to terrain and the Resource Protection Zone. Additionally, the west side of the Pleasant Pond Road is not suitable for development due to very steep terrain.

In summary, the greatest practicable **Growth Areas** are

- Commercial Development: Route 201 Corridor
- Residential Development: Available acreage behind Main Street, along Pleasant Pond Rd, North Shore Rd, and Fish Hatchery Extension

Our Capital Investments will be directed to maintain the existing 5.57 mile of roads by which these growth areas are accessed.

Growth Area Exemptions

As explained above, Caratunk has severe physical or topographical limitations which limit the prospect for growth. Steep terrain, in combination with the need to protect important resources through zoning, limits widespread development.

Additionally, according to the will of the people of Caratunk, development is only desired in the current developed areas, especially Route 201.

For reasons of economics, public safety and feasibility, the following constraints must be taken into consideration when processing proposals for new development:

- No local fire or law enforcement
- No public sewer or water
- The aging/declining population

Shared or Industrial Growth Areas

With regards to large-scale industrial growth or development, Caratunk residents are more concerned with

maintaining the town's character, scenery, wildlife then with generating tax revenue. According to the 2020 Community Survey, 70% of respondents are opposed to large scale industrial development whereas 16% would not oppose it if located away from water resources, scenic or significant wildlife areas, and also met ordinance requirements. Of the remaining 14%, some were unsure, others indicated it should be considered on a case by case basis. When asked to rate the importance of factors to consider before approving the placement of large industrial development, consideration for wildlife and scenic beauty were equally rated the most important-83.02%, followed by noise-75.47%, recreation and public safety-64.15%, health risks-52.83%, and then road wear and traffic-45.28%. Respondents gave tax revenue the lowest rating-32.08%.

In 2011, Caratunk voters enacted a wind moratorium upon threat of grid-scale, wind energy development. In October of 2011, Caratunk voters adopted a Wind Energy Facility Ordinance which protected what Caratunk residents treasured most – the scenery, view shed and recreational resources. Please see Wind Plan Map (Appendix)

In recent years, the Selectboard has been approached by large energy companies to place a solar farm at the former USAF radar station, bordering Moscow and Caratunk. In keeping with Caratunk's vision, this location would be an acceptable use of industrial space.

In 2019, Caratunk approved a cell tower along the Route 201 Corridor. This tower should be operational in 2020. This is an example of industrial growth within a proper setting and zoning and which does not conflict with Caratunk's natural resources, scenery, wildlife or safety. In fact, this cell tower will improve public safety for Maine's emergency responders as well as for Caratunk residents who should have telecommunications in the event of power outages.

The Future Land Use Plan will continue to be led and directed by the Caratunk residents. Caratunk residents have enacted the Special Entertainment Ordinance, Fireworks Ordinance, Caratunk Marijuana Ordinance and are now waiting to vote on the Caratunk Energy Systems Ordinance which combines solar and electrical transmission into the current wind ordinance. In light of developing technologies, Caratunk residents want to ensure that Caratunk's character, resources and all that landowners treasure, will be protected and maintained. Caratunk voters enacted an Electrical Transmission Corridor Moratorium while the Planning Board develops the Energy Systems Ordinance with the assistance of Kennebec Valley Council of Governments.

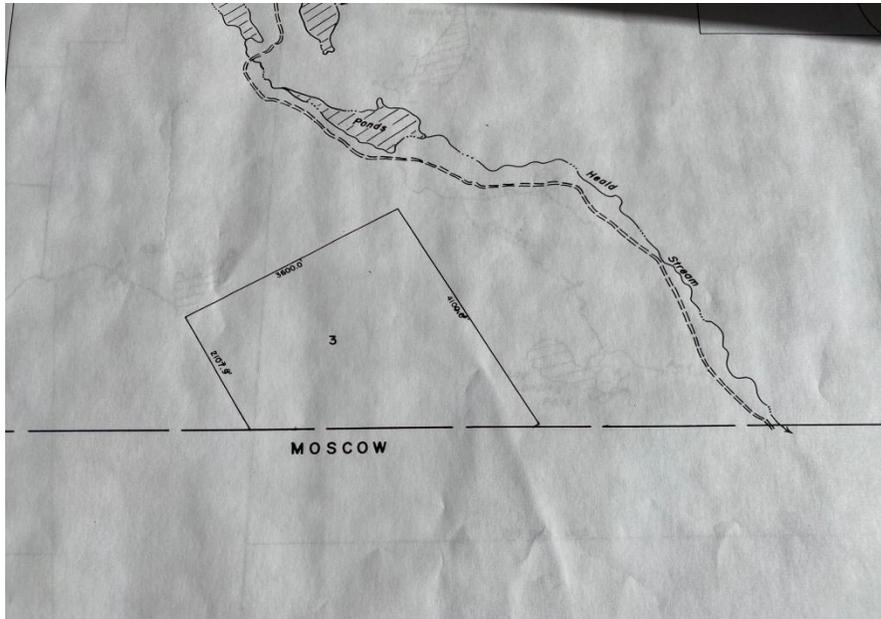
Transitional Areas

In determining Caratunk's transitional Areas, we must assess available borders and lands as well as neighboring communities.

Natural boundaries of Caratunk:

- Kennebec River (western border)
- Appalachian Trail (Northern border)
- Protected areas for wetlands, wildlife, water resources (eastern)
- Working Forest (interior)
- Moscow (southern border)

The only available land suitable for transitional development would be the former US Air Force Radar Site (Map 2, Lot 3), shared with the Town of Moscow on Caratunk's southern border. In the last five years, Caratunk has received and welcomed the proposal for a large-scale solar farm to be included in the New England Energy Grid. This location is suitable for a shared industrial project with the Town of Moscow and is in keeping with the Caratunk residents' desired vision for their town. Financially, a large scale solar farm in this industrial location would be extremely beneficial to the Town n providing for the capital investments needed to maintain to town roads.



Rural Areas

As previously discussed, nearly all of Caratunk is Rural Area.

The Land Use Ordinance has already identified areas deserving of regulatory protection while promoting the coexistence of wildlife habitat, fisheries habitat, scenic lands as well as the forestry industry and recreational opportunities. Most lands under the Tree Growth Program are open to public use for outdoor recreation. This does draw the public into Caratunk.

Land Use in The Forks Plantation, Bald Mountain Township, and the Town of Moscow is compatible abutting Caratunk lands. Often land on either side of the town lines is in the same ownership. The following are examples of boundary properties where the uses on either side of the town line are the same.

- Middle Mountain (adjacent to Pleasant Pond Mountain)
- Moxie Mountain
- Tree Growth land
- Caratunk/The Forks public lot
- Moxie Lake and Troutdale Rd

Caratunk's Land Use Ordinance ensures that the level and type of development in rural areas is compatible with the defined rural character of Caratunk. In terms of compatibility with adjoining communities, the zoning of the Management District would prohibit incompatible development.

Critical Natural Resources

It is the Town's goal to protect critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shore lands, scenic vistas and unique natural areas. Much of Caratunk's Land Use Zoning Map (Appendix C) has been divided into designations for which the primary goal is to protect the aforementioned resources. Caratunk's Land Use Ordinance, Wind Use Ordinance and the future Energy

Systems Ordinance have been focused on protecting resources, wildlife, fisheries, shorelands and scenic vistas as these are also the focus of Caratunk landowners.

Summary of Critical Natural Resources

Wetlands

The Town of Caratunk covers approximately 53 square miles of land area. Included within our boundaries are some of the best (cleanest and clearest) river and pond frontage in Maine, and outstanding forest and mountain areas as well. These natural resources of Caratunk act as both an opportunity and a constraint to planning and development. Most of us live here because of our attraction to Caratunk's environment, which is often demonstrated by our daily work and recreational pursuits. To a great extent, our livelihood and lifestyles depend on the quality of the natural resources around us.

The issue we face is whether future development or even management of the existing resources will result in a deterioration of these resources. Development could mean impacts on water supplies, lake water quality and the scenic and recreational assets that comprise a good portion of our local economy. Some parts of town will be more suitable for development than others, and some forms of development have more potential impacts than others. We need to plan for building or development that will complement rather than disturb our natural resources, with a minimum of disruption to private property rights.

For more information on Caratunk's Water Resources, please see **Appendix D: Primary Map 1, Water Resources and Riparian Habitats**.

Natural Resources

The variety of upland, pond and wetland habitat in Caratunk contributes to a rich array of wildlife. In summary, the Beginning With Habitat (BWH)'s **Natural Resource Co-Occurrence Map (Appendix E)** represents the concentration of selected environmental asset data layers overlaid on the landscape and is a summary of Primary Maps 1,2, and 3.

The **High Value Plant and Animal Habitats, Primary Map 2 (Appendix G)** depicts elements of our Wildlife resources that need special attention. Some habitat features are regulated by the State of Maine through the Maine Endangered Species Act (Essential Habitats and threatened and endangered species occurrences) and Natural Resources Protection Act (Significant Wildlife Habitat). Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife deems "Essential" wildlife habitat and "Significant" wildlife habitat. "Essential" habitat possesses features that are essential to the conservation of endangered and threatened species such as the Bald Eagle.

Rare, Threatened or Endangered Wildlife

- Northern Spring Salamander, *Species of Special Concern*, east of Route 201 and at Carney Brook outlet
- Bald Eagle, *Species of Special Concern* (Kennebec River/Route 201)

Rare or Exemplary Plants and Natural Communities

- Clinton's Bulrush, *Species of Special Concern*
- Circumneutral Outcrop, *Natural Community*
- White Cedar Woodland, *Natural Community*
- Red and White Pine, *Forest Natural Community*

There are a few types of "Significant" wildlife habitat, such as **moderate and high value Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat (WWH) and Deer Wintering Areas (DWAs)**, found within Caratunk's borders. Moderate and high value WWH's are wetlands that provide excellent cover for breeding, feeding, wintering, and migrating waterfowl and wading birds. These can be found adjacent to Robinson Pond Outlet, Moore's Bog, Log Landing Pond, adjacent to and west of Decker Ponds, Robinson Pond Outlet, Deer Bog, Doughnut Pond, Robinson Pond, Heald Ponds, northwest of Baker Pond, and upper Little Heald Brook. Chase Bog is another candidate for a moderate or high value WWH, but its classification has not been determined yet. These are nearly all remote locations with little or no chance of significant

disturbance.

The State has record of Deer Wintering Areas in Caratunk from Moore's Bog to Deer Bog and along Robinson Pond Outlet. Deer Wintering Areas, or deer yards, are especially crucial habitat in Central and Northern Maine. This is near the northern limit for Whitetail deer and the availability of a good DWA is the difference between life and death for many deer. They provide shelter from deep snow and fatally cold winds. Currently there is one active logging road (also snowmobile trail) going through this deer yard. While logging or even development is not necessarily incompatible with DWA activities, there are ways to do it intelligently in order to preserve the resource. However, it should be noted that the real or current Deer Wintering Area is the Kennebec River valley along Route 201.

A wildlife area of special concern is located just across the river. Henhawk Ledge is directly on the shore of the Kennebec in Carrying Place Township and is considered an historic habitat for **Peregrine Falcon**. Effective enforcement of Caratunk's shoreland zoning ordinance and sensitivity to the amount and type of development along the river will keep habitat available for this rarely sighted bird of prey.

Conserving habitat for certain types of wildlife has importance beyond just preserving natural resources. It also has economic benefits for the region and the State. Maintaining deer and duck populations keep hunters returning every year to spend millions of dollars on licenses, guides, food, lodging, gas, and other supplies. Viable wildlife populations of all sorts are valued by cash-spending tourists and Mainers alike, and they are a reminder that Maine is still a beautiful and pristine place.

Rare Plants and Unique Natural Areas

The Maine Natural Heritage Program has record of rare and endangered plants in Caratunk as well as Registered Critical Areas. The Registered Critical Areas are locations that landowners choose to voluntarily protect and to list with the state.

The rare plants in Caratunk include the New England Violet, Low Shadbush, and Sycamore. The New England Violet is somewhat rare in Maine and grows in gravelly or ledgy shores and in moist meadows. The Low Shadbush is extremely rare and not originally native to the State. It tends to grow in rocky or sandy shores or banks. The Sycamore occurred historically in Maine, but, as far as anyone knows, there are none currently growing. The last Sycamore seen in Caratunk was in 1948.

There are two Registered Critical Areas in Caratunk: Baker Pond Falls and the Caratunk Esker. Baker Pond Falls are at the mouth of Baker Pond and are valued because of their unique geology and scenic beauty. Baker Pond Falls are one of 50 "significant" waterfalls in Maine and begin in a 13 foot gorge with a 16 foot drop over about a 50 foot course. The Caratunk Esker covers about 37 acres on Wyman Lake just south of the village. Also called "horsebacks" or "whalebacks", eskers are large, cigar-shaped gravel deposits left by the last glacier. The Caratunk Esker is one of the largest and best-formed eskers in the State and is very uncommonly double-ridged (each ridge is over 100 feet high).

Current zoning already protects critical natural resources. There are high restrictions on development in and around water or steep terrain. The only residential areas along water are already regulated by Shoreland zoning and the Maine DEP.

Future Ordinance to Protect From Potential Threats

To date, none of the critical natural resources are threatened by development, overuse or other activities with the exception of the proposed New England Clean Energy Connect transmission corridor. On October 25, 2018, Caratunk voters enacted the Electrical Transmission Corridor Moratorium Ordinance.

Section 2. Purpose and Necessity

A. Purpose

The Purpose of this Ordinance is to protect the public health, safety and welfare of the residents of Caratunk by fostering orderly Electrical Transmission Corridor (ETC) development. During the term of the moratorium, the Town of Caratunk will determine the most appropriate methods to regulate Electrical Transmission Corridors and prepare or update appropriate municipal ordinances to achieve such.

B. Necessity

The Town of Caratunk currently has insufficient performance standards in its local land use regulatory ordinances that provide municipal review and approval for Electrical Transmission Corridor development. There is high interest in Electrical Transmission Corridor development in the town and nearby areas. The location of Caratunk is believed to be conducive to Electrical Transmission Corridor development. Without sufficient local regulations to address said Electrical Transmission Corridor development, there exists the potential for serious public harm if such are developed. Serious public harm includes but is not limited to visual impact, noise, environmental degradation and health.

Over the last year and a half, townspeople have grown considerably more concerned over this corridor. Serious public harm includes but is not limited to **fire/emergency dangers** (without local resources), **visual impact and associated property devaluation, noise, environmental and human health degradation**, as well as financial **burdens on the town and landowners due to the absence of dismantling funds** at the project end-of-life. Similar to the wind power ordinance, the town needs to update its Land Use Ordinance to ensure that the town maintains and allows proper operations and boundaries consistent with the comprehensive plan and the ways of life that Caratunk residents and landowners have come to expect. Much like wind power, the Town must look not only at the present state, but also into the future - for the lifespan of a corridor and its dismantling.

During the term of the moratorium, which was extended twice through April 25, 2020, the Town of Caratunk Planning Board is working with KVCOG to produce the Caratunk Energy Systems Ordinance which combines solar and electrical transmission with the current wind power ordinance. This ordinance should protect Caratunk’s lands from future, incompatible energy project development.

This is one prime example of how Caratunk’s Future Land Use Plan is adapting to prepare for new trends in technological development. The Wind Power Ordinance protected Caratunk land from future unrestricted wind development, and now the Energy Systems Ordinance will protect Caratunk from unrestricted solar and electrical transmission.

The Caratunk Planning Board will continue to support the town’s vision through responsible application of the town’s ordinances for future development.

Given the downward population trend, very little residential development is necessary or expected.

| Future Land Use Plan Maps | | |
|--|---|------------|
| Growth Area, Rural Area, Land Use District | Land Use Zoning Map | Appendix C |
| Critical Natural Resources | Water Resource & Riparian Habitats | Appendix D |
| | Natural Resource Co-Occurrence | Appendix E |
| | Wetland Characterization | Appendix F |
| | High Value Plant and Animal Habitats | Appendix G |
| Transitional Area | Undeveloped Habitat Blocks & Connectors & Conserved Lands | Appendix H |
| | Caratunk Constraints | Appendix A |
| Town Geographical Constraints | Caratunk Constraints | Appendix A |

Future: Land Use Districts

A. Resource Protection District.

The Resource Protection District includes areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or scenic and natural values. This district shall include the following areas when they occur within the limits of the Shoreland Zone, exclusive of the Stream Protection District:

- 1) **Community's Vision:** The highly regulated district is in line with the community's vision for protecting our natural resources, especially our water bodies
- 2) **Natural opportunities/constraints:** This district protects fragile or unique areas and pristine water bodies from invasive development. The areas within this district are remote and sometimes inaccessible.
- 3) **Types/intensities of proposed land uses:** There are no proposed land uses in this district besides stream side recreation trails accessing the water. Surrounding lands remain wild, located in the Management District which is primarily used for forestry and recreation.
- 4) There are no new uses or proposed changes of use.
- 5) There are no anticipated major municipal capital investments need to support this district.

B. Stream Protection District.

The Stream Protection District includes all land areas within 75 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a stream, exclusive of those areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high-water line of a great pond, or river, or within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of a wetland. Where a stream and its associated shoreland area are located within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the above water bodies or wetlands, that land area shall be regulated under the terms of the shoreland district associated with that water body or wetland.

- 1) **Community's Vision:** The highly regulated district is in line with the community's vision for protecting our natural resources, especially our water bodies
- 2) **Natural opportunities/constraints:** Opportunities exist for passive recreation activities which involve no structural or mechanical components or facilities, such as hiking, fishing and hunting. Other development is discouraged. Science and nature education is also allowed.
- 3) **Types/intensities of proposed land uses:** See above
- 4) There are no new uses or proposed changes of use. The Planning Board has had no applications to date in this district.
- 5) There are no anticipated major municipal capital investments need to support this district.

C. Conservation District.

The Conservation District provides a layer of ecological protection against those land uses that may adversely affect natural resources. The Conservation District includes the following land areas, exclusive of the Resource Protection and Stream Protection Districts, as defined above:

- 1) **Community's Vision:** The Conservation District provides a layer of ecological protection against those land uses that may adversely affect natural resources.

- 2) **Natural opportunities/constraints:** Opportunities exist for passive recreation activities which involve no structural or mechanical components or facilities, such as hiking, fishing and hunting. Other development is discouraged. Science and nature education is also allowed as well as forestry.
- 3) **Types/intensities of proposed land uses:** See above.
- 4) There are no new uses or proposed changes of use.
- 5) There are no anticipated major municipal capital investments need to support this district.

D. Management District.

The Management District provides for some residential and recreational development while promoting forestry and other agricultural activities.

- 1) **Community's Vision:** The Community wants to maintain forests and recreational opportunities
- 2) **Natural opportunities/constraints:** Given that 90% of the Town is in this district and within this intact area, forestry and recreation coexist on a large scale.
- 3) **Types/intensities of proposed land uses:** There is sparse development in this district including a few homes, a cell tower and a 7-lot subdivision where the majority of acreage remains in Tree Growth.
- 4) There are no new uses or proposed changes of use
- 5) The Pleasant Pond Road will be the recipient of municipal capital investment. Please see Residential District, item 5 below.

E. Residential District.

The Residential District comprises the area where existing residential development is concentrated and where future residential development is desired.

- 1) **Community's Vision:** The Community wants to maintain our residential areas, but there is not much available undeveloped land.
- 2) **Natural opportunities/constraints:** Residential areas are naturally accessible as well as constrained by town roads. The majority of Caratunk's homes are in the Village or at Pleasant Pond. There are very few residential areas at the Pond on private roads and, therefore, do not have year-round access.
- 3) **Types/intensities of proposed land uses:** Residential homes and home-based businesses
- 4) There are no new uses or proposed changes of use
- 5) The majority of municipal capital investments is located in this district. Our 5.57 miles of roads are in dire need of repair and upgrading. A long term, comprehensive road maintenance plan is being developed.

F. General Development District.

The General Development District comprises those areas with the highest existing development density, and where future mixed commercial, residential and public development is desired.

- 1) **Community's Vision:** In accordance with the Community Survey results, the community wants to maintain commercial development in our general development areas along Route 201.
- 2) **Natural opportunities/constraints:** Constraints include the Kennebec River (west), the residential area, and steep terrain (east). Route 201 provides the natural opportunities for business in conjunction with neighboring communities. However, since Route 201 is also a National Scenic Byway, the ordinance requires consultation with the Scenic Byway Board of Directors for proposed development.

- 3) **Types/intensities of proposed land uses:** Commercial development is the most desirable in this district. The development must benefit the area, align within the current ordinances, and coexist with our vision of quality of life and recreational atmosphere.
- 4) There are no new uses or proposed changes of use
- 5) There are no anticipated major municipal capital investments need to support this district.

Implementation Strategies

The Tables following identify the Goals, Policies and Strategies to be implemented to carry out the plan for the future. The requirements listed in Chapter 208, section 4, #1, D, (2) have already been implemented in the current Land Use Ordinance. There are no proposed changes to land use, and therefore, there is no Capital Investment Plan for proposed land uses. There is no need to meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations that are already established. Based on private landowner agreements/authorizations, there would be a need to meet with others in the region to upgrade recreational trail systems. The Code Enforcement Officer maintains certification. There is no anticipated municipal growth, and therefore, capital investments are designated for critical infrastructure needs such as roads.

Future Land Use Plan Strategies

| | | |
|---|---|----------------|
| GOAL: Encourage orderly growth/development in appropriate areas while protecting the state’s rural character and natural resources, protecting the community’s desired vision/desires, protect Caratunk’s peaceful character, quiet neighborhoods, noise levels. Make efficient use of public services. | | |
| Policy | Protect town and forest/natural resources from threats of fire (ie PG&E California fires) | Planning Board |
| Strategy | Analyze new energy technologies | Planning Board |
| Strategy | Regulate future development on south of Pleasant Pond to ensure/prevent increased traffic levels on dangerous roads and the burden of traffic on the village residents. | Planning Board |
| Strategy | Monitor traffic to measure traffic at peak points during summer months | Select Board |
| Strategy | Fill Appeals Board vacancy | Planning Board |
| Strategy | Maintain compatible uses with neighboring communities | Planning Board |

Chapter One: History and Archaeological Resources

Caratunk is very close to its history. A great many structures that have survived to this day have a direct link to significant events in the town's history. The town has a sense of its heritage through efforts to identify and preserve our history including but not limited to a resident’s collection of artifacts.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| GOAL: Preserve Caratunk's Historic and Archeological Heritage. | | |
| Policy | Active preservation and research into historic and archeological artifacts. | Upper Kennebec Valley Historical Society |
| Strategy | Add ordinance standards requiring recognition of historical and archeological significance in development proposals. | Planning Board |
| Strategy | Identify local person(s) as maintainers of the Town History and records of historic structures. | Select Board |
| Strategy | Amend the land use ordinance to incorporate information on historical or archaeological assets and ensure that applicants take appropriate measures to protect those resources in their proposed site design or excavation | Planning Board |

Chapter Two: Water Resources

The Town of Caratunk covers approximately 53 square miles of land area. Included within our boundaries are some of the best river and pond frontage in Maine, and outstanding forest and mountain areas as well. The natural resources of Caratunk act as both an opportunity and a constraint to planning and development. Most of us live here because of our high environmental quality demonstrated by our daily work and recreational pursuits.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| GOAL: Maintain the extraordinary quality and extensive quantity of Caratunk’s water resources, which impact our economic, cultural and recreational resources | | |
| Policy | Protect the quality of Caratunk’s surface and ground waters | |
| Strategy | Ensure that road treatments and road building are not polluting Pleasant Pond Stream, Pleasant Pond, etc. | Select Board |
| Strategy | Continue to support the Pleasant Pond Protective Association which monitors water quality , provides educational signage to prevent aquatic invasive species , encourages landowners to protect water quality, brings in speakers to annual members meeting, and takes other protective measures such as monitoring public access at the public boat launch. | Selectmen and Caratunk’s Legislative Body |

Chapter Three: Natural Resources

It is the Town’s goal to protect critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shore lands, scenic vistas and unique natural areas. Much of Caratunk’s Land Use Zoning Map (Appendix C) has been divided into designations for which the primary goal is to protect our resources.

| | | |
|--|--|----------------|
| GOAL: Protect Caratunk’s critical natural resources, including wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic vistas and unique natural areas. | | |
| Policy | Conserve critical natural resources in Caratunk. | |
| Strategy | Ensure that the Land Use Ordinance designates the critical natural resources, DWA, and Significant Wildlife and Fisheries assets in the Future Land Use Plan. | Planning Board |
| Strategy | Via the Future Land Use Plan, require the Planning Board to include, as part of the review process, consideration of pertinent BWH maps and information regarding critical natural resources. | Planning Board |
| Strategy | Continue to require subdivision or non-residential developers to identify CNR on site and take appropriate measures to protect with modification of design, construction timing or extent of excavation. | Planning Board |
| Strategy | Participate in, when possible or available, public/private partnerships, including but not limited to land easements or purchases, to protect critical and important natural resources. | Select Board |
| Strategy | Make regulatory information or current use tax programs information available. | Select Board |

Chapter Four: Agricultural and Forest Resources

Forestry is the largest resource-related activity by far in Caratunk. Industrial forest land comprises close to 90% of the acreage in town and supplies much of the tax base and some of the employment upon which we depend. Merchantable timber and pulpwood help support woods operations and landowners like Weyerhaeuser, while the forest as a whole supports such activities as hunting, fishing, and hiking (Appalachian Trail hikers particularly value the forested landscape). The surrounding woods also add aesthetic value for many seasonal home owners, tourists, and for the recreation industry in the area.

| | | |
|--|---|----------------|
| GOAL: Protect forest resources from development which threatens these resources. | | |
| Policy | Safeguard commercial forestry lands. Support forestry and its economic viability. | |
| Strategy | Ensure landowners in Tree Growth are managing their lands appropriately for the forest health and economic viability. | Select Board |
| Strategy | Protect the forestry land from large wholesale transactions | Planning Board |
| Policy | Ensure the continued viability of other significant natural resources, including scenic resources and forest productivity. | |
| Strategy | Cause commercial logging operations to retain a road bond to repair Caratunk roads | Select Board |
| Strategy | Limit non-residential development in critical rural areas to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses and home occupations. | Planning Board |

Chapter Six: Economy

Most of the Caratunk businesses are involved in the tourism economy, either directly or indirectly. The strategies below are geared towards enhancing the economic setting, attracting tourists and related job opportunities, and protecting recreational opportunities for year-round and seasonal residents.

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| GOAL: Promote the economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being. | | |
| Policy | Support the community’s desired type of economic development | |
| Strategy | Enact or amend local ordinances to reflect desire scale, design, intensity and/or location of future economic development | Planning Board, Selectmen |
| Strategy | Identify mechanisms (grants, bonds, etc.) to be considered to finance capital investment requirements, such as road paving. | Select Board |
| Policy | If possible or necessary, coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns to support desired development or to oppose undesired development. | |
| Strategy | Participate in likeminded regional economic development planning efforts. | Select Board |
| Strategy | If appropriate, assign responsibility or provide financial support for economic development activities. | Select Board |
| Policy | Provide suitable local government support for existing/proposed business enterprises that build on our local assets. | |
| Strategy | Support efforts to build recreational business and attract more tourists. | Select Board |
| Strategy | Review and amend the zoning ordinance to provide a better process and performance standards for new commercial development. | Planning Board |

Chapter Seven: Housing

The projected need for housing is low. The town should support landowners on maintaining and upgrading existing infrastructure and for the development of any available lots.

| | | |
|---|--|----------------|
| GOAL: Encourage affordable, decent housing opportunities for Maine citizens | | |
| Strategy | Support the efforts of local landowners to develop the available lots in the village, Pleasant Pond and along Route 201 to address affordable housing needs for local workers. | Planning Board |

Chapter Eight: Recreation

Caratunk is surrounded with year-round, outstanding recreational opportunities and benefits from nationally-recognized and widely-used natural resources. Recreation is the very essence of our local economic well-being and must be preserved.

| | | |
|---|---|--------------|
| GOAL: Promote and protect Caratunk’s outdoor recreation opportunities | | |
| GOAL: Improve the quantity and quality of outdoor recreation experiences for both residents and visitors, including access to surface waters. | | |
| Policy | Seek to achieve one major point of public access to Pleasant Pond with a grant or trust. | |
| Strategy | Inventory potential sites at Pleasant Pond to purchase land with private donations, grants, easements for the purpose of public access | Select Board |
| Policy | Improve and promote the local recreation-oriented business climate. | |
| Strategy | Support efforts to build recreational business and attract more tourists to the area. | Select Board |
| Strategy | Participate in regional or statewide efforts to promote ecotourism opportunities. | Select Board |
| Strategy | Work with conservation organizations, land trusts or private landowners to protect recreation opportunities in Caratunk’s Management District (especially from forestry wholesale land transfers) | Select Board |
| Strategy | Assign a committee to create a list of recreational needs, develop a recreation plan to meet these needs and implement these strategies. | |
| Policy | Encourage private clubs and businesses to maintain/upgrade existing recreational trails | |
| Strategy | Work with public and private partners to support improvements to local snowmobile and ATV trails including applying for state trail improvement grants, if and when appropriate. | Select Board |
| Strategy | Stay working closely with Brookfield, the Appalachian Trail, and field recreationists’ suggestions for improving the Kennebec Boat Landing. | Select Board |

Chapter Nine: Transportation

The Transportation objective of the Town is to plan for, finance, and oversee improvements to ensure that its 5.57 miles of road system is safe, well-constructed and maintained for residents and visitors. The road system of Caratunk represents its single largest asset, and with its current dire conditions, the roads carry the Town’s largest financial burden.

| | | |
|---|--|--------------|
| GOAL: Plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public transportation facilities/services to accommodate growth. | | |
| Policy | Efficiently maintain/improve Caratunk's transportation system specifically town roads. | |
| Strategy | In consultation with the DOT, compile a comprehensive, long-term Service and Maintenance Plan for Caratunk roads. | Select Board |
| Strategy | Grade the shoulders of the roads | Select Board |
| Strategy | Develop a policy (Road Regulation Ordinance) in consultation with Weyerhaeuser and the State of Maine and local contractors concerning weights and usage of Pleasant Pond Road. Specifically, require the logging operation put up a bond to cover wear on Caratunk roads. | Select Board |

Chapter Ten: Public Facilities and Services

With a population of under 100 residents, Caratunk has responsibility for a relatively small system of public facilities. We must strategically plan for the future in order for our budget to reflect our vision and our history of being fiscally responsible.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| GOAL: Plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities/services to accommodate growth. | | |
| Policy | Identify public facility/service needs | |
| Strategy | Determine how to attain a fire vault at the Town Office for safe document preservation | |
| Strategy | Determine how cost-efficiently convert Town Office to emergency management facility by exploring grants to purchase a generator, etc. | |
| Policy | Improve community involvement in an aging community | |
| Strategy | Fill the Planning Board Appeals Board with residents who are year-round residents (as there is one member who has left during the last few winters) | |
| Strategy | Improve attendance at town meetings | |
| Strategy | Find a new clerk/registrar to eliminate people servicing multiple positions. | |

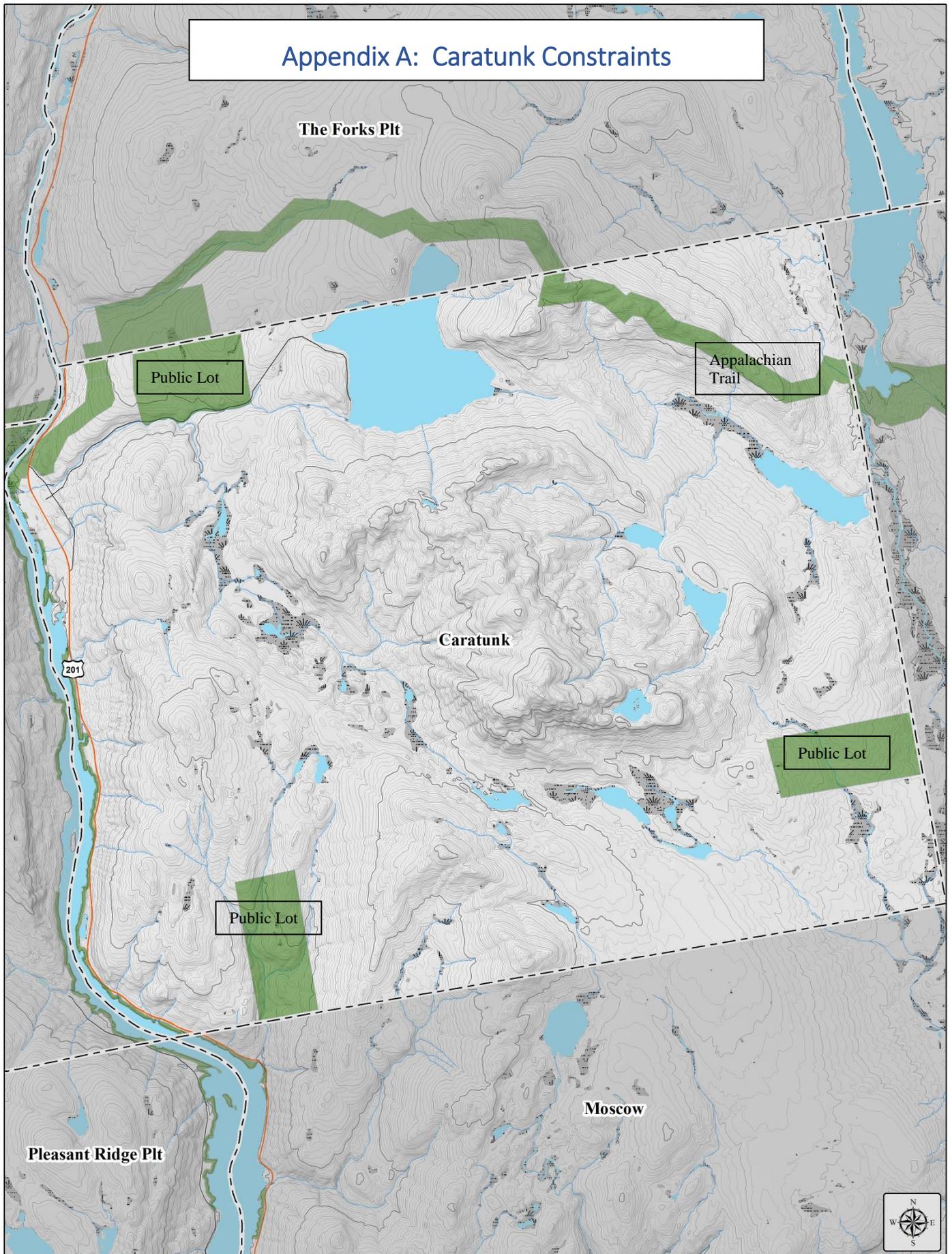
Chapter Eleven: Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan

Our goal is to manage public facilities and services in a responsible, sustainable way and to ensure that current or future policies support this vision.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| GOAL: Plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities/services to accommodate growth. | | |
| Policy | To cost effectively finance future facilities and services and explore available grants, etc. (in addition to a municipal bond for large expenses such as road paving) | |
| Strategy | Continue to explore regional coordination programs, private or public grants, municipal bonds, etc. | |

Evaluation

In an effort to ensure that the Goals, Policies and Strategies listed in this Comprehensive Plan are employed, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will be established. The Committee will meet every 2 years or as needed.



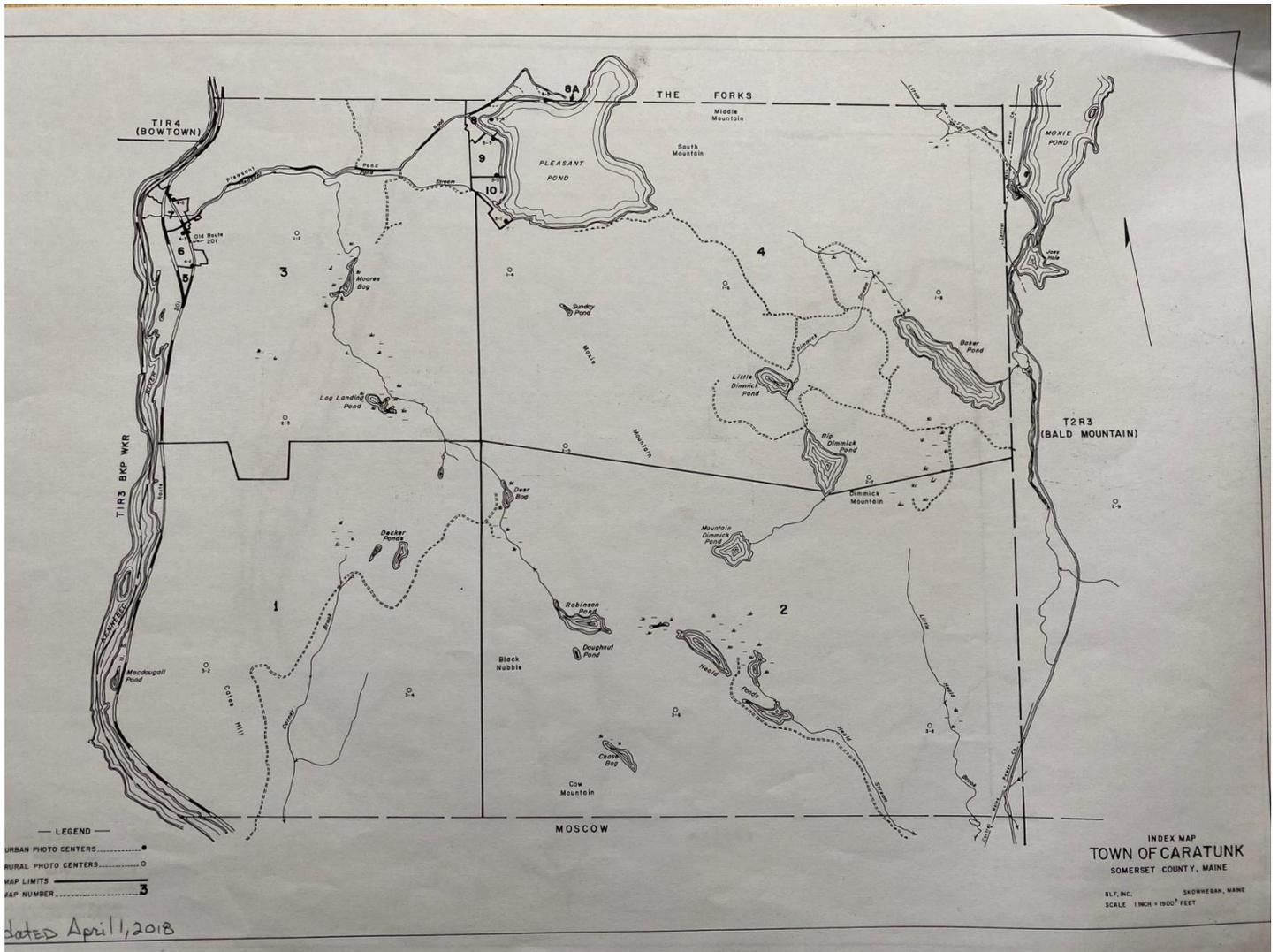
Appendix A: Caratunk Constraints



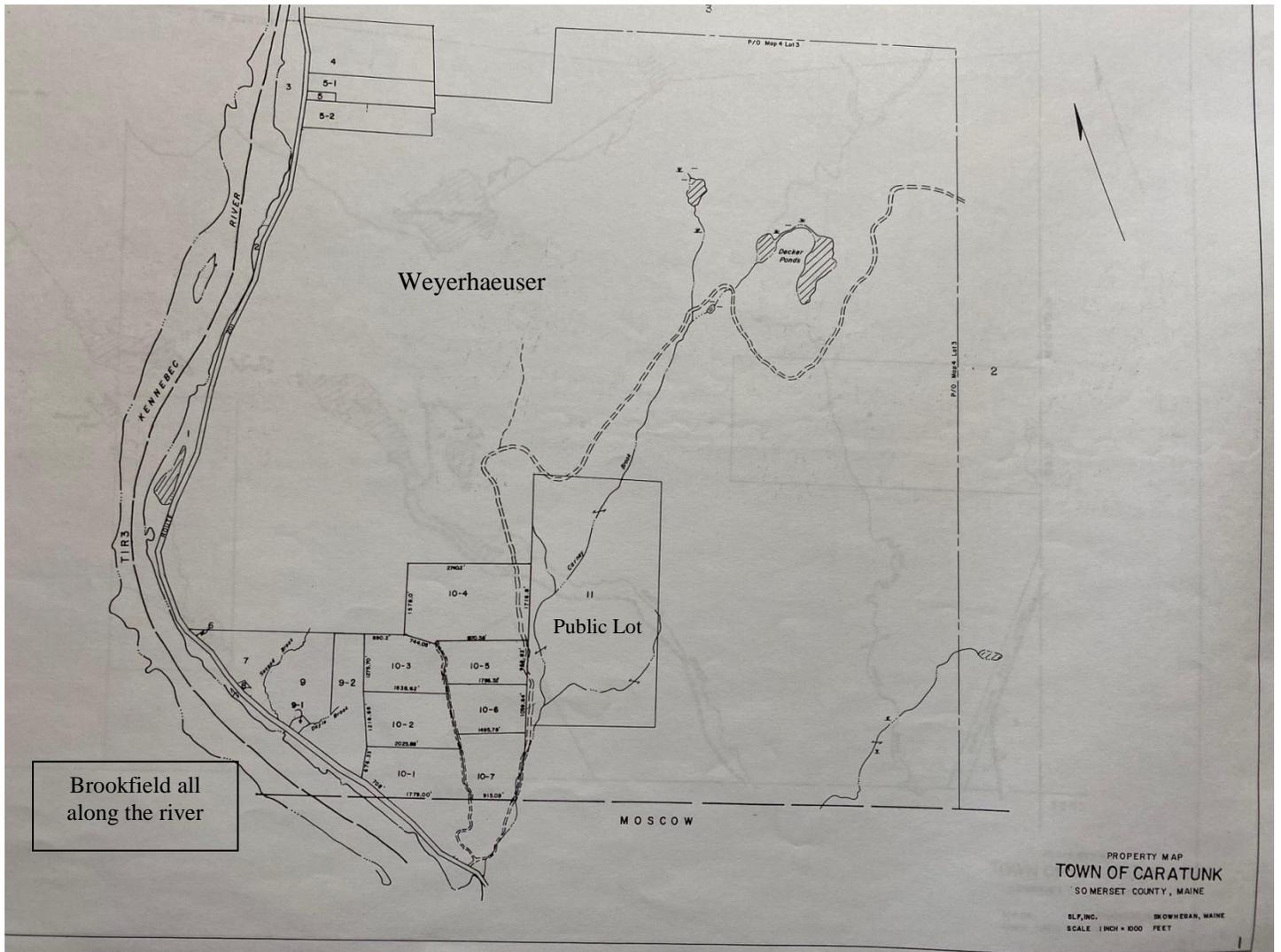
**Caratunk
Development Constraints**

0 1 2 Miles

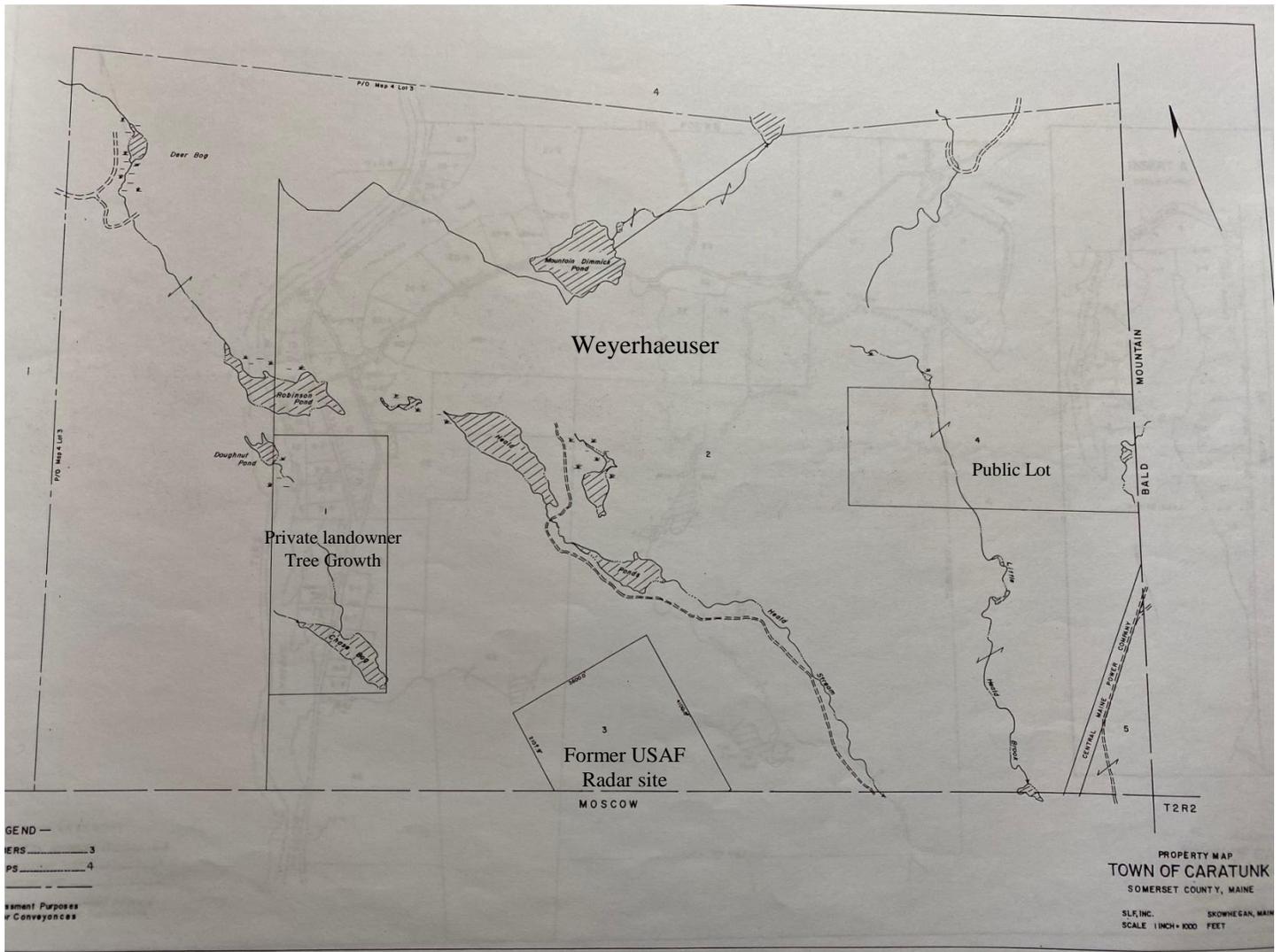
Appendix B: Caratunk Tax Maps



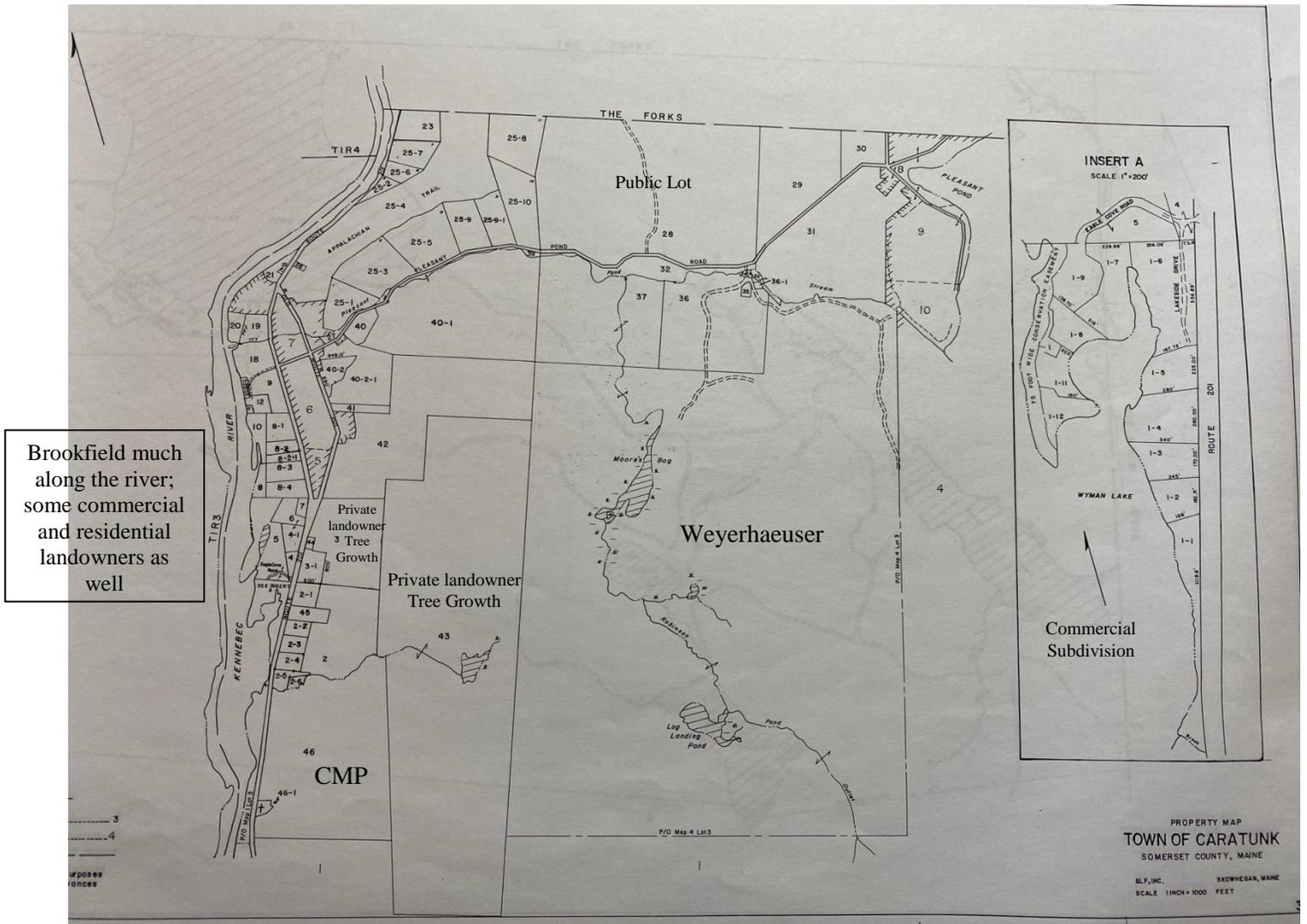
INDEX MAP



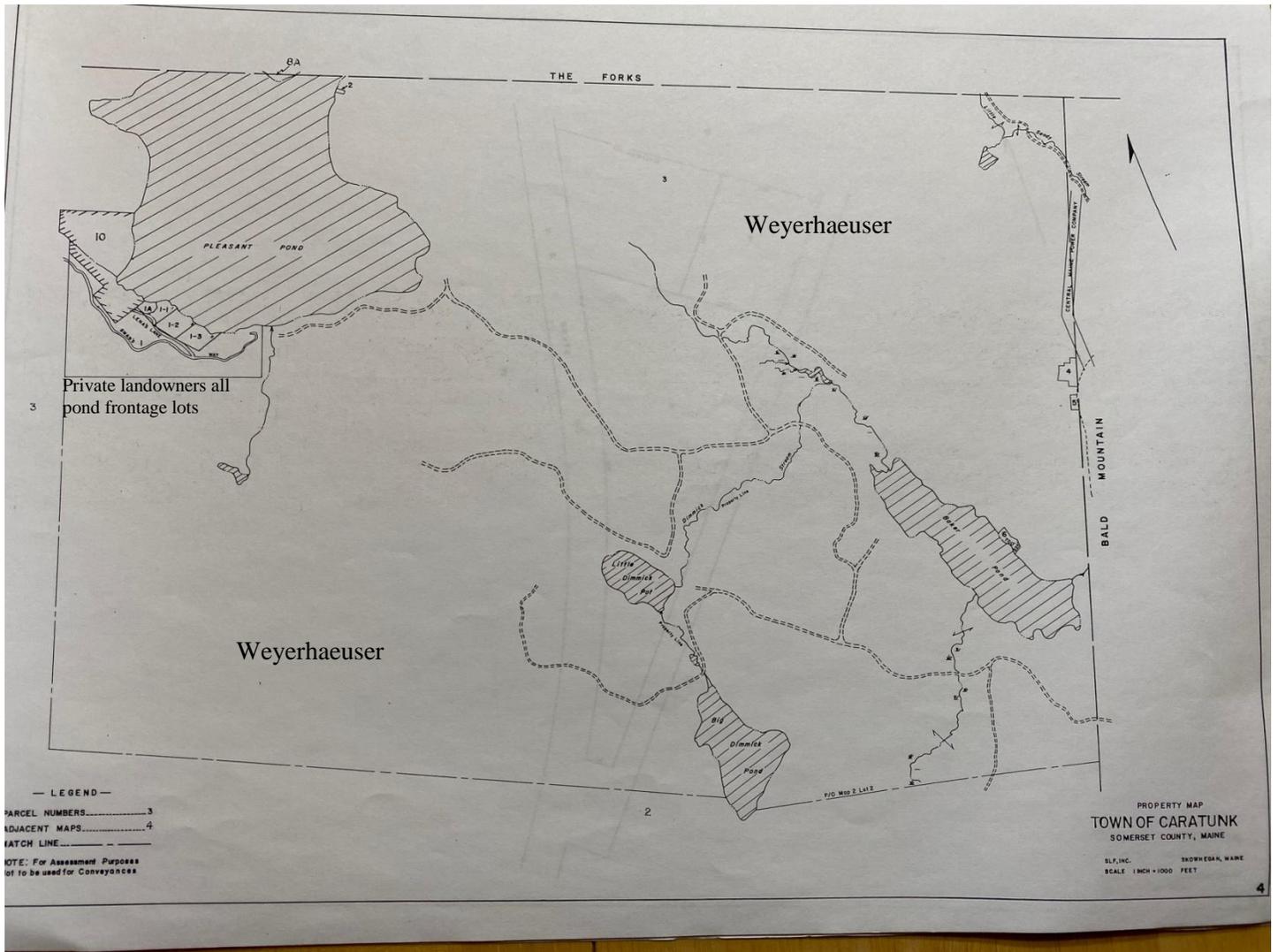
Lots 10-1, -2, -3, -4, -5, -6, -7 comprise the Cates Hill subdivision. Nearly all land is in the Tree Growth Program with only a few acres taken out for building. Only one year-round home is located here. The road is privately owned by the 7 landowners.



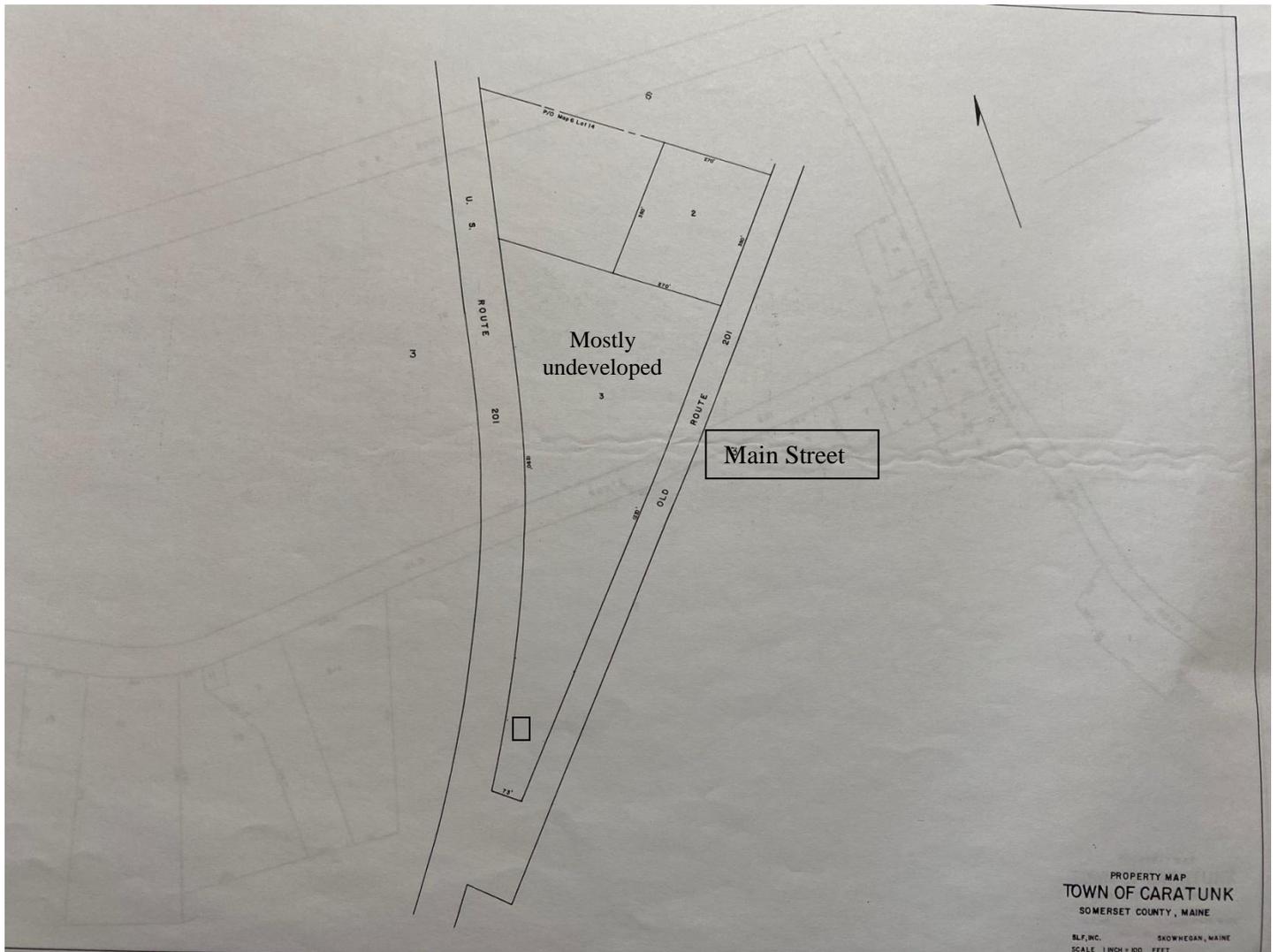
MAP 2



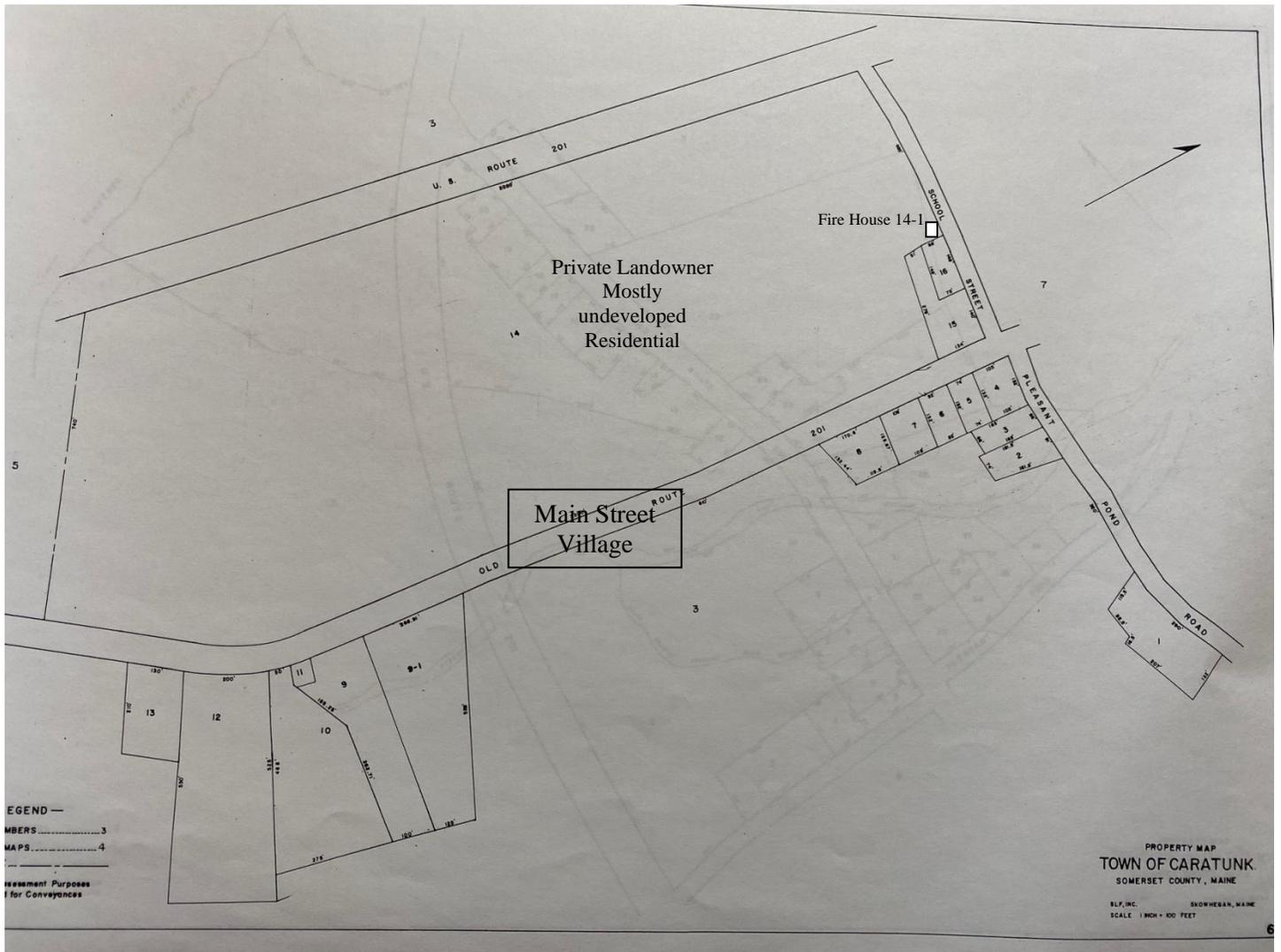
MAP 3



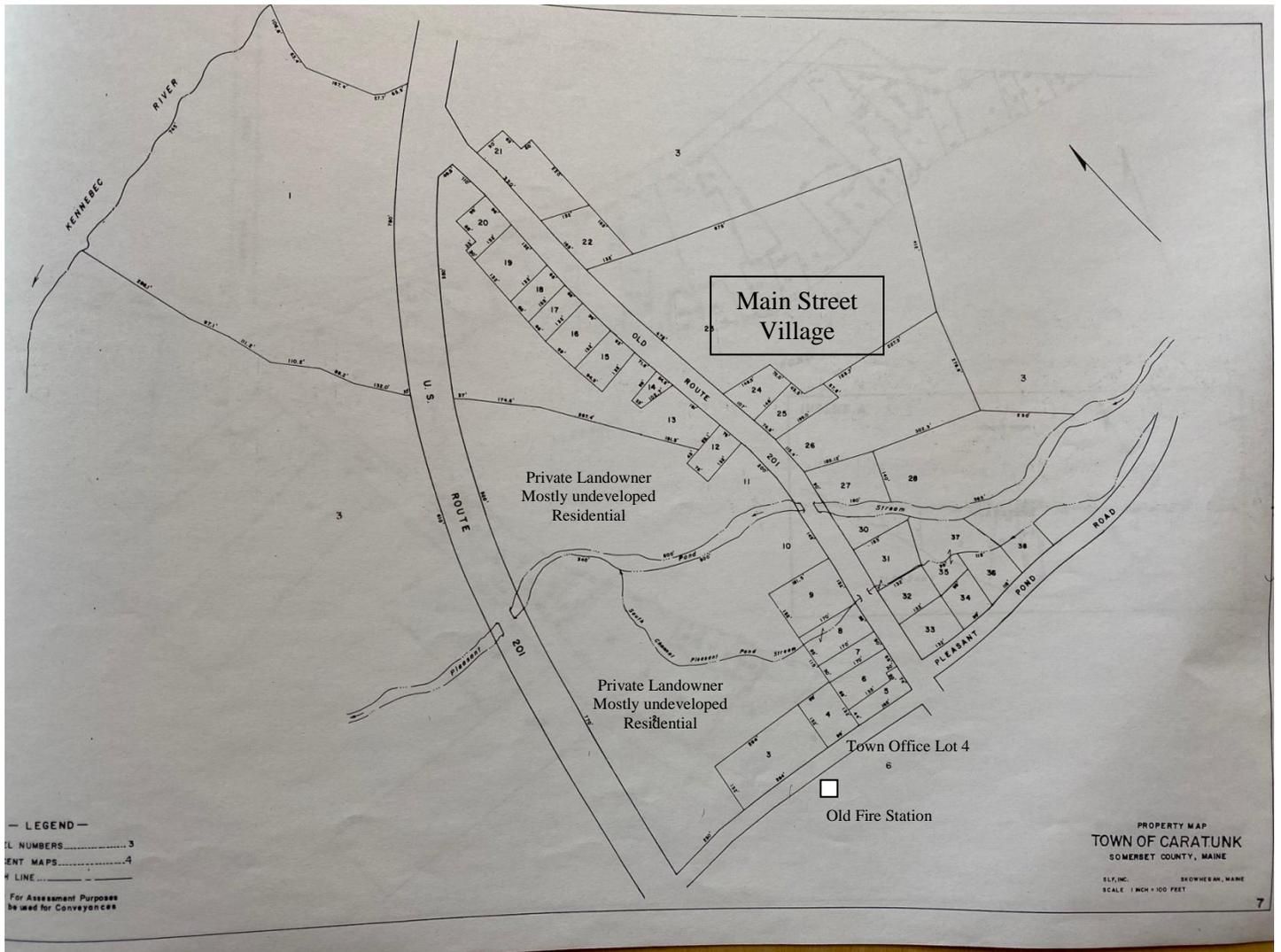
MAP 4



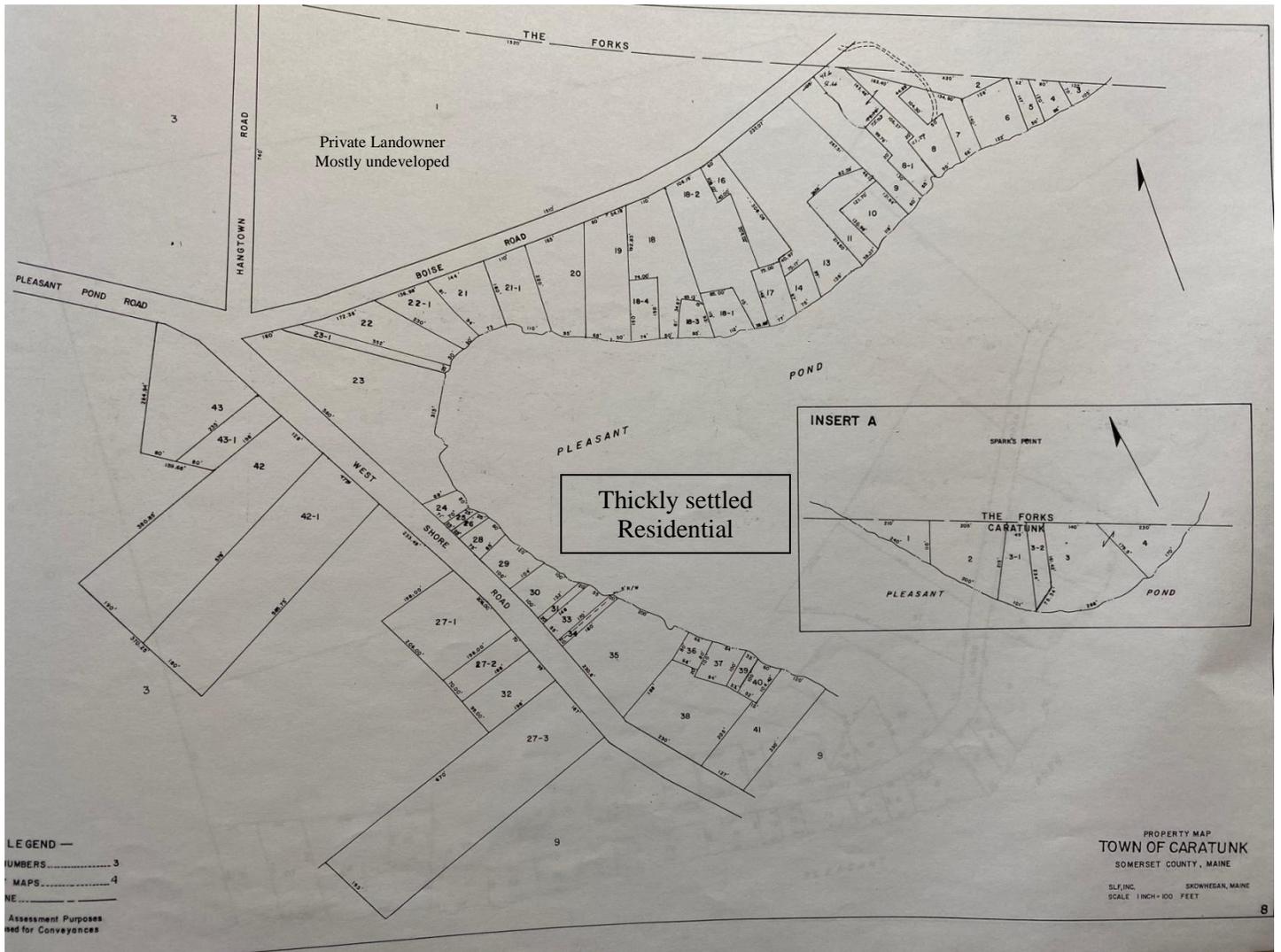
MAP 5



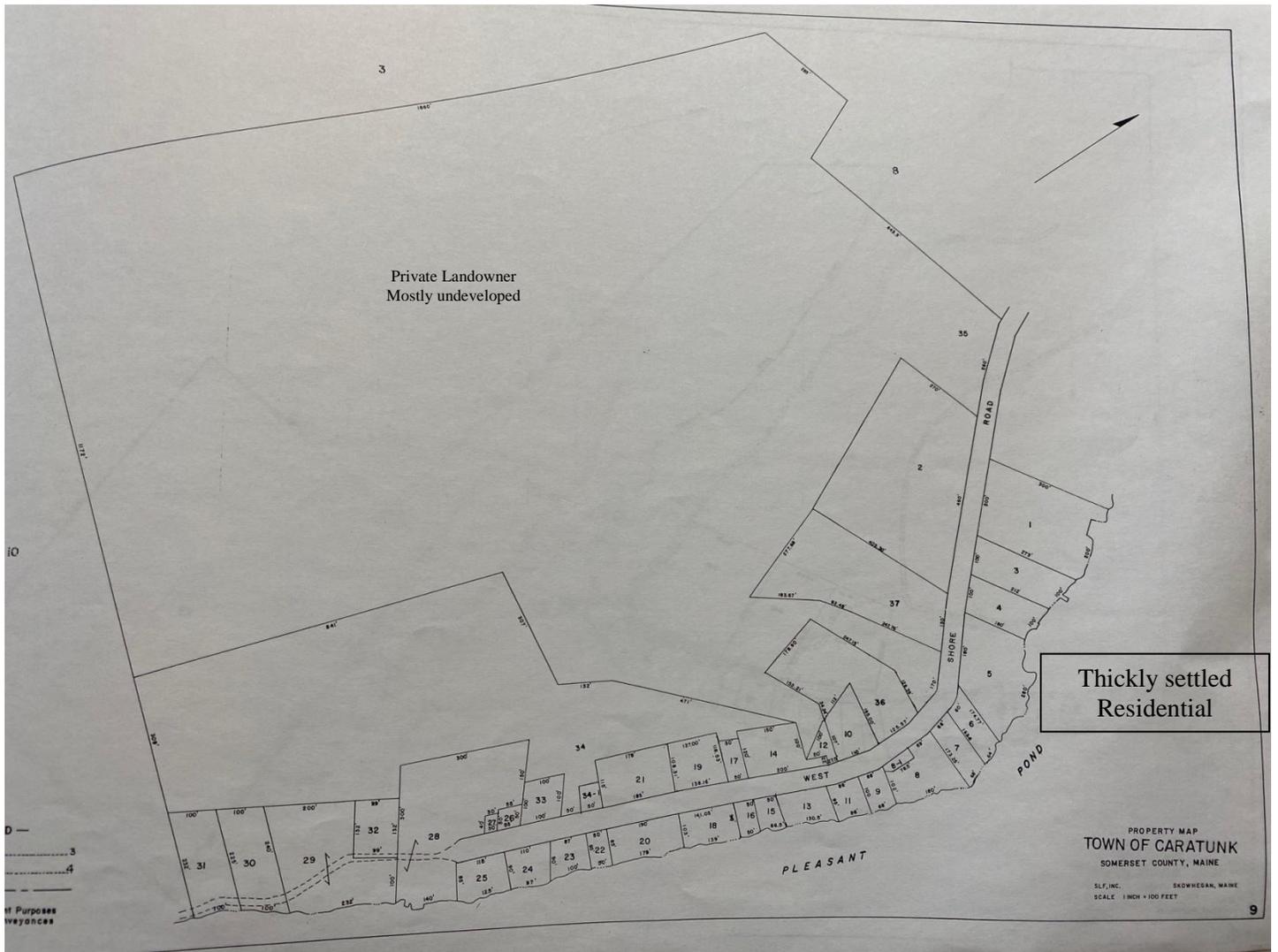
MAP 6



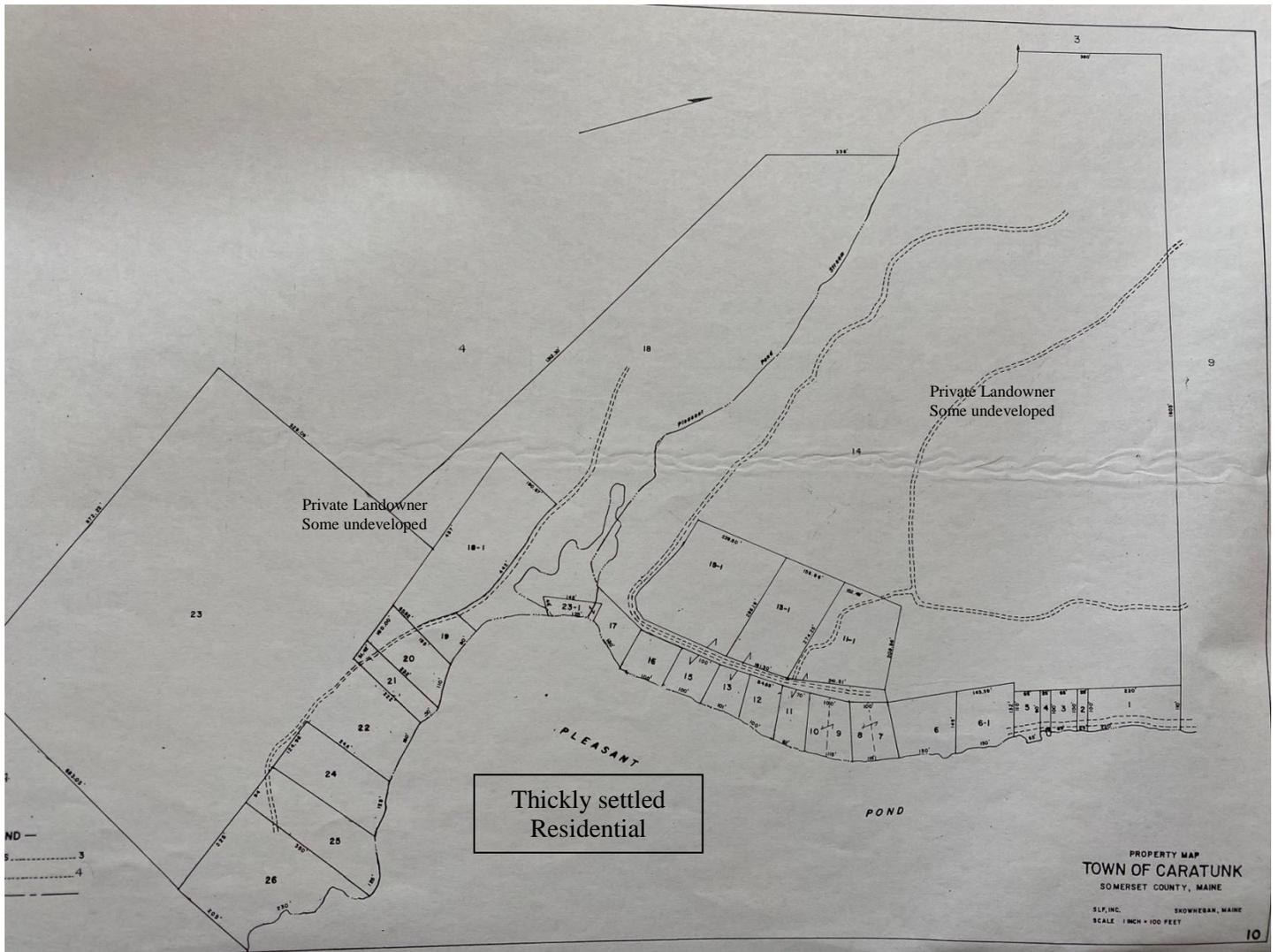
MAP 7



MAP 8



MAP 9



MAP 10

Land Use Map
 Town of Caratunk
 Somerset County, Maine

Map Scales:
 Land Use Map
 1 inch = 2500 feet
 Aerial Photo Inset Map
 1 inch = 1250 feet

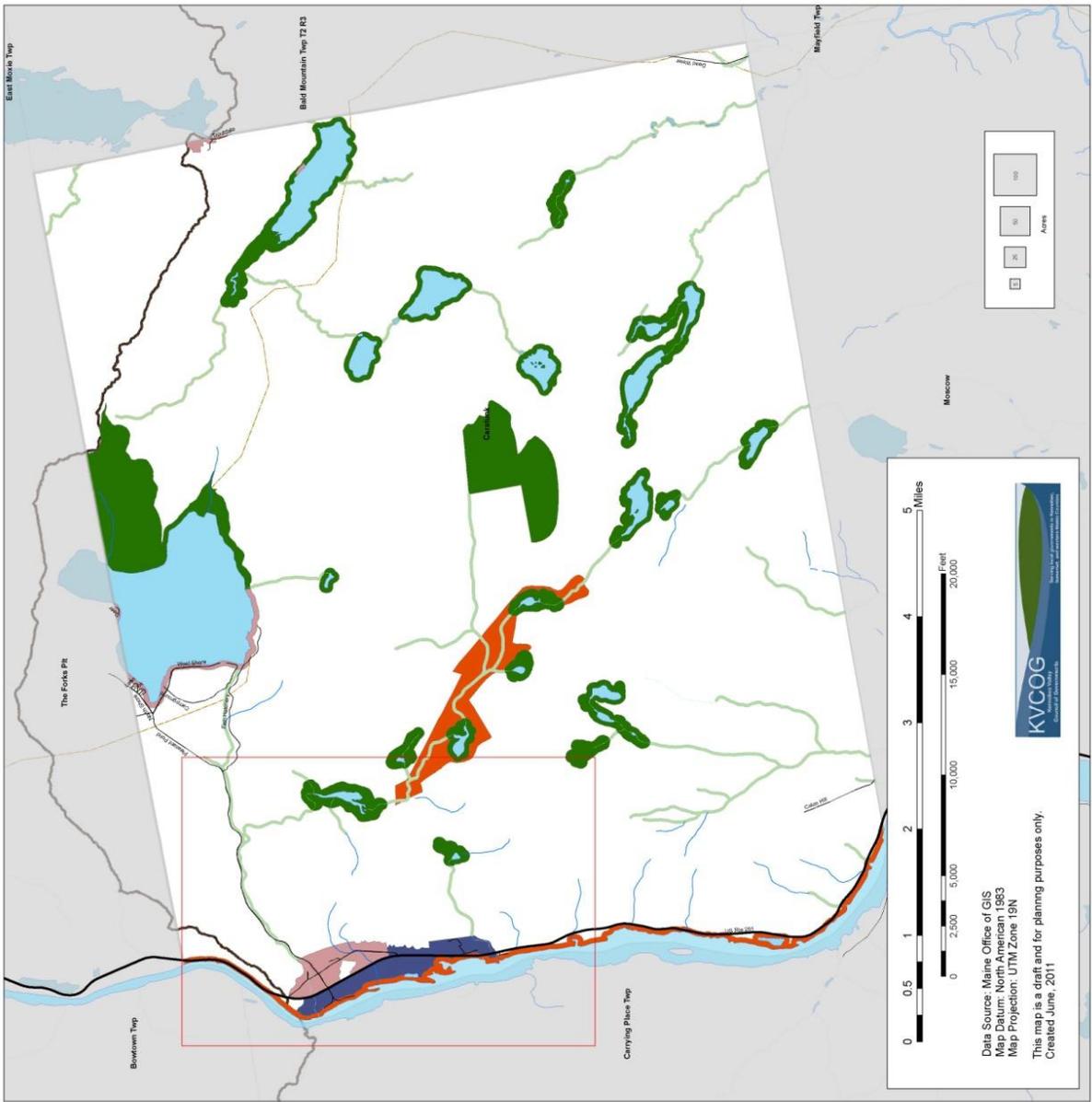
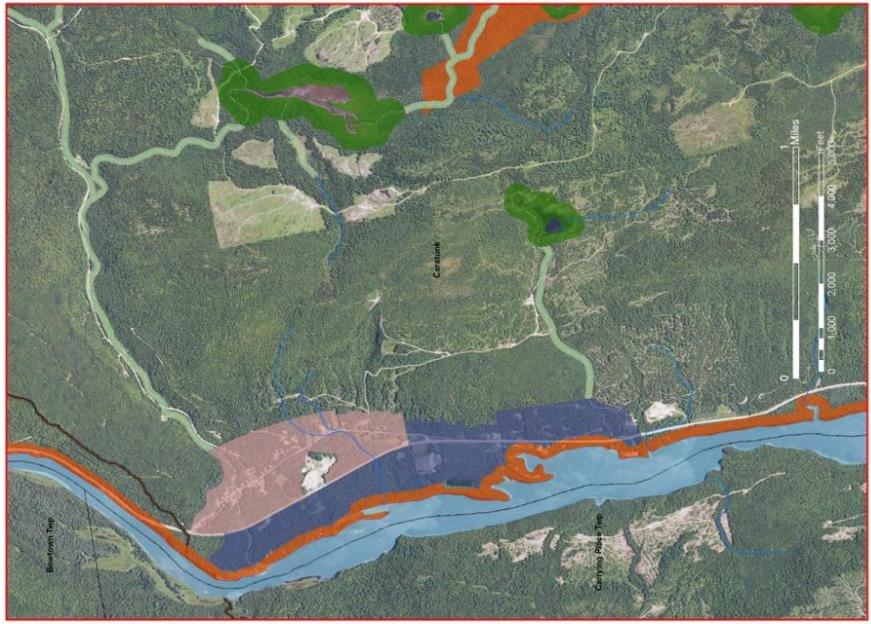
Legend

Land Use Districts

- Reserve Protection
- Stream Protection
- Conservation
- Residential
- General Development
- Other Facilities
- Personal Districts
- Intermittent Streams
- Wetlands
- Roads
- Approximate Tie Center

DISTRICT MEASUREMENTS FROM WETLANDS
 Ponds and Rivers: 250 feet from the normal high waterline
 Wetlands: 250 feet from the upland edge of the wetland
 All Measurements are subject to field verification.

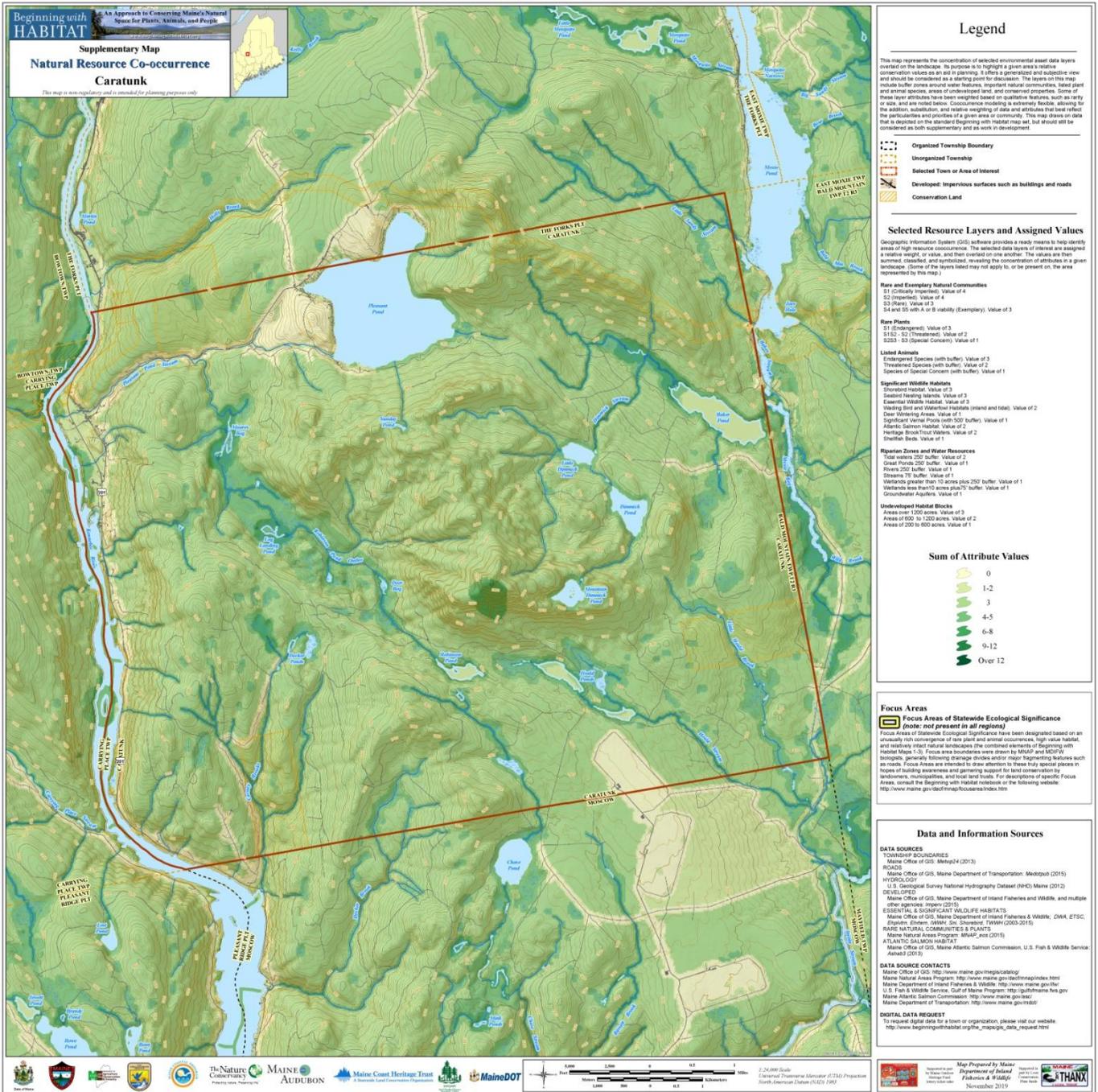
Planning Board Chair: _____
 Date Approved: _____



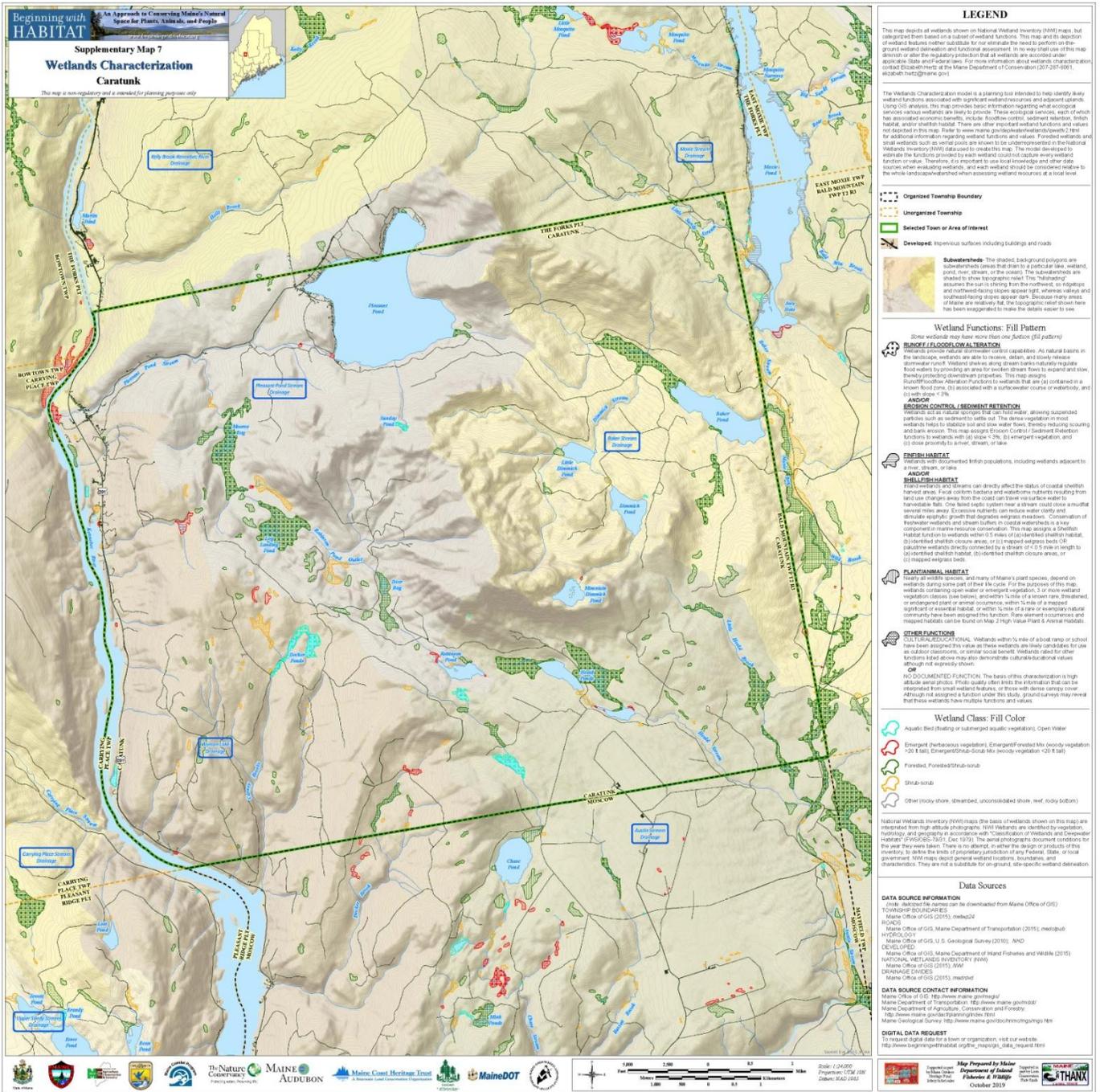
KVCOG
 KENNEBEC VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
 REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Data Source: Maine Office of GIS
 Map Datum: North American 1983
 Map Projection: UTM Zone 19N
 This map is a draft and for planning purposes only.
 Created June, 2011

Appendix E: Natural Resource Co-Occurrence, Supplementary Map



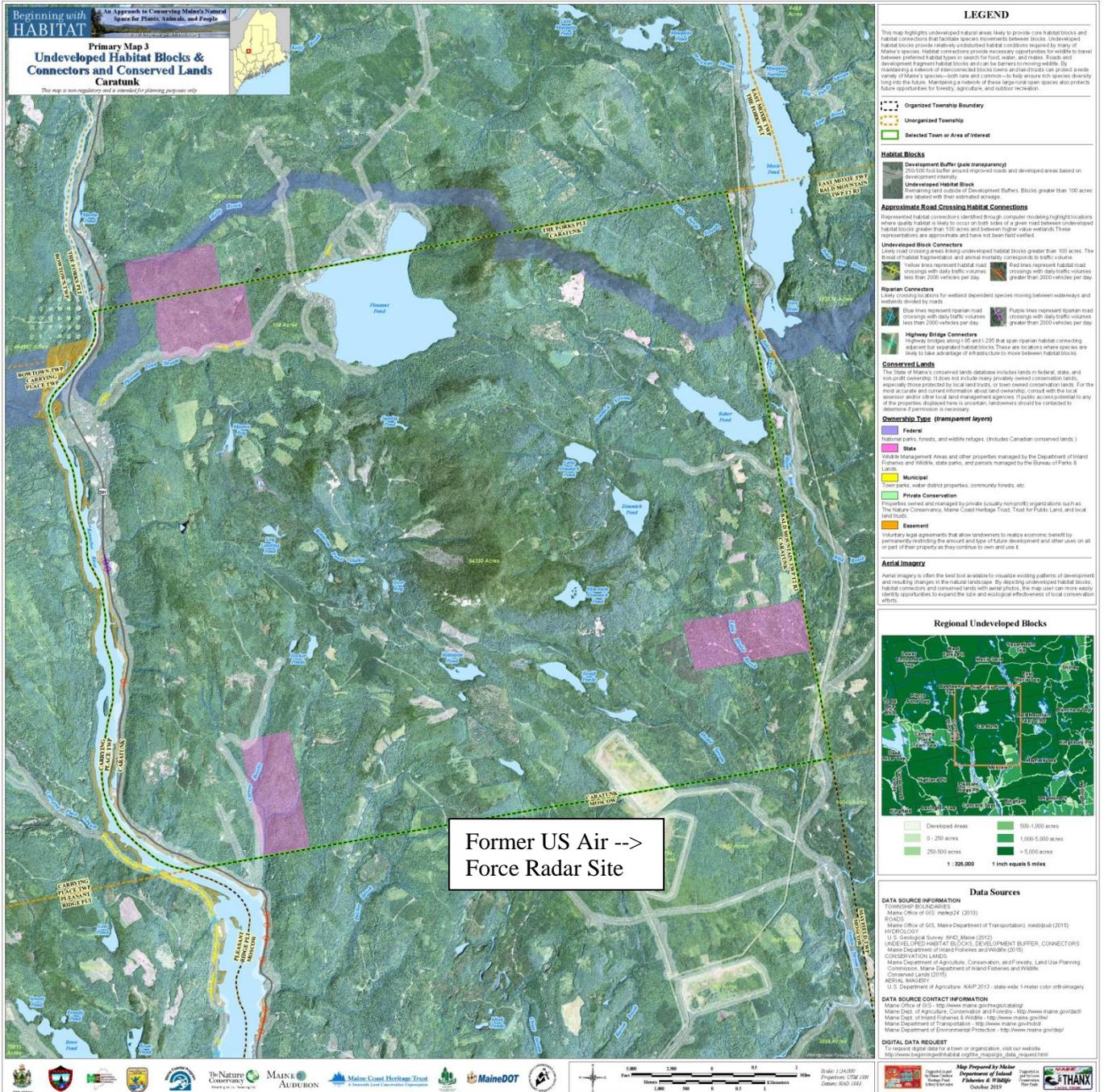
Appendix F: Wetland Characterization, Supplementary Map 7



Appendix G: High Value Plant and Animal Habitats, Primary Map 2



Appendix H: Undeveloped Habitat Blocks & Connectors & Conserved Lands, Primary Map 3



Appendix I: Significant Sand and Gravel Aquifers, Caratunk
Quadrangle

See attached

Appendix J: 2020 Community Survey

Town of Caratunk Community Survey

1. Are you a year round resident or nonresident?

- Resident
- Nonresident
- Other (please specify)

2. Please identify your age group.

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

3. If a resident, how often do you attend town meetings?

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Seldom
- Never

4. If a nonresident, which of the following best describes your visits to Caratunk? Check all that apply.

- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter

5. My time spent in Caratunk is best described as

- Several months
- Weeks
- Weekends
- Day visitor

6. If your residence is seasonal, do you plan to convert it to year round use?

- Yes No

7. Please indicate your primary reason for spending time in Caratunk.

- Scenic beauty
- Small town atmosphere
- Recreation
- Work opportunity
- Other (please specify)

8. Caratunk spends a significant amount on maintaining and improving town roads. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the condition of the following:

- | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|------|-----------------------|------|-----------------------|------|
| Pleasant Pond Rd. | <input type="radio"/> | Excellent | <input type="radio"/> | Good | <input type="radio"/> | Fair | <input type="radio"/> | Poor |
| West Shore Rd. | <input type="radio"/> | Excellent | <input type="radio"/> | Good | <input type="radio"/> | Fair | <input type="radio"/> | Poor |
| North Shore Rd. | <input type="radio"/> | Excellent | <input type="radio"/> | Good | <input type="radio"/> | Fair | <input type="radio"/> | Poor |
| School St. | <input type="radio"/> | Excellent | <input type="radio"/> | Good | <input type="radio"/> | Fair | <input type="radio"/> | Poor |
| Main St. (north end) | <input type="radio"/> | Excellent | <input type="radio"/> | Good | <input type="radio"/> | Fair | <input type="radio"/> | Poor |
| Main St. (south end) | <input type="radio"/> | Excellent | <input type="radio"/> | Good | <input type="radio"/> | Fair | <input type="radio"/> | Poor |

9. Caratunk has an agreement with the Bingham Fire Dept. for fire protection due to the lack of certified local manpower. Dry hydrants have been installed in the village, at the Kennebec River, and at Pleasant Pond. Are you satisfied or unsatisfied with the current level of protection?

- Yes No

If unsatisfied, what changes would you like to see?

10. Although Caratunk has a state police officer and a sheriff's deputy residing in town, it has no local constable. Are you satisfied with the level of police protection in town?

- Yes No

11. Caratunk has its own school board and pays tuition and transportation costs for students to attend the school of their choice in other districts. Do you approve of the current system? If not, what changes would you recommend?

12. Caratunk supports the Upper Kennebec Valley Ambulance Service. Do you approve of this arrangement?

- Yes No

13. Are you familiar with Caratunk's Land Use and Zoning Ordinance?

- Yes
- No

14. If you are familiar with the Land Use and Zoning Ordinance, please rate your level of satisfaction with it.

- Extremely satisfied
- Satisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Extremely unsatisfied

15. If you are unsatisfied with the Land Use and Zoning Ordinance what changes would you like to see?

16. Which factors should be considered before allowing future residential or commercial development? Check all that apply.

- Noise
- Traffic
- Road wear/ tear
- Public safety
- Alteration of character

17. Please indicate your preference for the best location for future residential development.

- The 201 corridor
- The village area
- The Pleasant Pond Road
- At Pleasant Pond

18. Where would you prefer to see future commercial development located?

- The 201 corridor
- The village area
- The Pleasant Pond area

19. Have you ever approached the town selectmen with any questions or concerns?

- Yes
- No

20. If you answered yes to Question 19, please rate your level of satisfaction with their response.

- Extremely satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Extremely unsatisfied

21. Caratunk has curbside pickup of trash and participates in a regional recycling effort. Are you satisfied with the current system?

- Yes
- No

22. If you answered no to Question 21, what changes would you like to see?

23. Please describe where you think the town should concentrate future infrastructure improvements.

24. Caratunk does not have a historical society, but much town history is available at the Upper Kennebec Valley Historical Society in Bingham. Are you familiar with this organization?

- Yes
- No

25. If you answered yes to Question 24, have you visited the UKVHS either in person or online?

- Yes
- No

26. Many Maine communities share in regional organizations in order to pool resources and lower costs. Caratunk currently participates in regional waste management, recycling, and road salt /sand purchase and storage. What additional areas of regional cooperation would you like to see the town explore?

27. Utility service is important considering Caratunk's rural and isolated location. Please indicate your overall level of satisfaction with the current level of service.

| Electrical | Land line | Cell phone | Internet |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Very satisfied |
| <input type="radio"/> Satisfied | <input type="radio"/> Satisfied | <input type="radio"/> Satisfied | <input type="radio"/> Satisfied |
| <input type="radio"/> Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> unsatisfied | <input type="radio"/> unsatisfied | <input type="radio"/> unsatisfied | <input type="radio"/> unsatisfied |
| <input type="radio"/> Very unsatisfied |

28. How do you feel about large industrial infrastructure in Caratunk?



29. Currently Caratunk's Wind Power Ordinance allows for wind infrastructure in certain areas which do not interfere with current uses, aesthetics, recreation or visual obstruction. What factors should be used to regulate placement of large scale infrastructure? Check all that apply. w 0

- Noise
- Recreation
- Scenic view
- Health risks
- Road wear