

# TOWN OF COOPER, MAINE



Cathance Lake from Cooper Hill



Snapping turtle laying her eggs in front of Cathance Grange, last Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting, June, 2010

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN July 2010

# THE TOWN OF COOPER

## 2010 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Prepared by the Cooper Comprehensive Plan Committee:

Dan Ackley  
Angie Boisvert  
Lynn Brown  
Mary Dunn  
Ronald Flood  
Neal D. Hallee  
Karen Holmes  
Nancy Marsh  
Joanne McMahan  
Joyce Mykleby  
Peter Shotwell  
Terry Viselli  
Bob von Rotz

Consultant:

Washington County Council of Governments

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page #
A. Executive Summary	A-1
Map 1: Location of Cooper in Washington County	end of section A
B. Historical and Archaeological Resources	B-1
Map 2: Cooper Public Facilities and Transportation	end of section B
Map 2A: Cooper Vehicle Collisions 1996-2006	
C. Population	C-1
D. Natural Resources	D-1
Map 3: Topography, Steep Slopes and Flood Zones	end of section D
Map 4: STATSGO Soils	
Map 5: Water Resources	
Map 6: Land Cover	
Map 7: Critical Habitat	
E. Employment and Economy	E-1
F. Housing	F-1
G. Transportation	G-1
H. Public Facilities and Services, Recreation and Open Space	H-1
I. Fiscal Capacity	I-1
<i>Capital Improvement Plan</i>	I-6
J. Land Use	J-1
<i>Proposed Land Use Districts</i>	J-6
Map 9: Land Use and Zoning	end of section J
Map 10: Proposed Land Use	
K. Town Survey Results	K-1
L. Regional Coordination	L-1
M. Plan Implementation	M-1
Appendix A – Town Survey and Written Comments	App A-1
Appendix B – Community Meeting Summary	App B-1
Appendix C – State Policies	App C-1
Appendix D – Wildlife Sightings in Cooper	App D-1

**A. VISION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The town of Cooper chose to prepare its first Comprehensive Plan in the wake of a decision by voters to retain an organized, Town Meeting/Selectmen form of government. A move by the town to deorganize was met, in 2006, by resistance from the legislature that included a directive to the town to meet with adjoining towns to seek efficiencies in delivery of local services. Discussions with adjoining towns and with new local leaders led to a decision to use the funds that were already raised for the purpose of exploring deorganization to instead prepare this Comprehensive Plan.

**Public Participation Summary**

Community members were consulted throughout the process in numerous ways. The Comprehensive Plan Committee is composed of a broad cross section of community interests and walks of life. They met monthly in the Cathance Grange Hall or, when winter weather made use of that building impossible, in the homes of a variety of committee members.

Information about, and input to, the Comprehensive Plan was sought at three large public meetings. These included the Annual Meeting of the Cathance Lake Association, a presentation by staff from the Beginning with Habitat program of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and a Community Visioning meeting. All of these meetings were publicized in the local paper through press releases and paid advertisements. For the community visioning meeting the information inset at right was provided to residents through brightly colored posters and in a town wide post card mailing to all property owners.

<b>Cooper Residents and Property Owners: Come to Help Plan Cooper's Future</b>	
<b>WHEN:</b>	Thursday September 10 from 6:00 – 8:00 PM
<b>WHERE:</b>	Cathance Grange
<b>WHY:</b>	The Comprehensive Plan Committee needs your input
<b>HOW:</b>	Participate in a 2 hour meeting on the future of Cooper - eat some snacks – win some fuel oil!
Participate and Enter a DRAW to WIN \$100 worth of fuel from the LOCAL vendor of your choice You <u>must participate</u> and be present <u>to WIN</u> Winner to be announced at 8PM September 10th	

In addition a town wide (resident and non-resident) survey was mailed to all property owners that affirmed the open invitation to participate in monthly meetings of the Comprehensive Plan Committee that spanned an 18 month period.

The results of the survey (29.6% response rate) are summarized in Chapter L – Town Survey Results and written comments are reproduced in their entirety in Appendix A – Town Survey and Written Comments. The notes from the community visioning meeting are provided in Appendix B - Community Meeting Summary. Survey input informs policy development in each chapter throughout the document.

A vision statement for the town was generated from the collective input provided by the visioning meeting and the survey, particularly written comments.

**Town of Cooper Vision Statement**

The town of Cooper envisions a future of slow planned growth that supports agriculture, cottage industry, services, and a store to serve local needs. There will be a community building with modern facilities for gatherings and town affairs. Cathance Lake will retain its pristine water quality with strong stewardship by the town and the lake association and forests will be managed for long term sustainable production.

The primary artery and regional connector road, State Route 191, will be fully constructed to include shoulders and a foundation that supports regional freight traffic. Trails for hiking, ATVs and snowmobiles will be maintained on public and private land with respect for private property owners and connections to networks of trails in the region.

Residential growth will continue with support for private land stewardship, retention of open space around the lake and other sensitive areas including Vining Lake, Mill Pond and the Cranberry Flowage. Cluster subdivision plans and development away from the lakes will be encouraged in an effort to balance an increase in the tax base with protection of lake water quality. Public access to the lake will be maintained.

Second home development will be a strong part of our housing stock and the town will continue to be a bedroom community to other regional centers. We will once again provide a way-station for services at a store on Route 191 that serves travelers and the community.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to provide a community with the information and a process to make choices about its future. The town of Cooper has involved its resident and non-resident community members in the development of this plan. It has also made use of extensive resources available through the US Census, several agencies of state government, the Washington County Council of Governments and geographic information system (GIS) mapping. The document will serve the town for a 5 to 10 year time horizon and, as a living document, will be revised and updated as new information and understanding develops. *The following summarizes each section of the document and readers are directed specifically to the Policies and Implementation Strategies section for greater detail about the choices Cooper is making about its future growth and development.*

**History**

The history of Cooper is based upon the natural resources that drove the local and regional economy, including logging, and more recently, blueberries. Many current residents can trace their families back to the town's early days. Cooper enjoys many of the benefits from our past. It is a small town with a strong sense of community where people look out for one another. The town seeks to maintain a link to its heritage and support for development that retain the scale and appearance of the town as well as preserve its historic character.

**Population**

The population of Cooper peaked early, in 1840 and then declined until the 1970s. It has increased steadily in the last 30 years. A slight to modest population increase over the next ten-year period is indicated by past trends. However, an adjustment in this upward trend may occur with recent significant increases in the price of fuel and other costs of living as well as the distance of the town of Cooper from medical, dental, retail, educational and other services. Contrary to the trend in Washington County, Cooper had 38 children enrolled in school in the year 2000, a significant increase since 1990. This figure reflects both an increase in elementary and high school enrollment (from 8 in 1990 to 26 in 2000) as well as an increase in post-secondary enrollment (from 5 in 1990 to 12 in 2000). Recent (since 2000) shifts in the number of school aged children indicate a level number of families moving in and out of Cooper. Again, rising fuel costs may force those now commuting to service centers for school and employment to move out of town.

There is a large and growing seasonal population. Like elsewhere in Washington County Cooper's population is aging. The overall age structure is similar and reflects an aging population. The number of households has increased indicative of more retiree, single person families. The town will continue to make available demographic information to residents in particular tracking any the shifts of existing seasonal housing and residents to year-round status.

**Natural Resources**

Cooper currently offers protection to its natural resources with locally adopted shoreland zoning regulations. These ordinance provisions will be updated to be consistent with the requirements of State and Federal Regulations and reviewed for improvement to specifically protect the lakes in Cooper. The town will continue to cooperate with the many local and regional organizations working to protect the natural resources within and surrounding Cooper including the Dennys and East Machias River Watershed Councils, the Downeast Lakes Land Trust and neighboring communities. Regional efforts will focus on watershed protection, and land conservation.

**Economy and Employment**

Cooper is a small community primarily dependant on regional sources of employment. Most residents rely on wage and salary income and retirees compose a larger part of the population compared to the county as a whole. The top three sectors of employment for Cooper are 'Education, health and social services'; 'Construction; and 'Manufacturing'. The residents of Cooper have income levels that are higher than residents of Washington County as a whole. However, with the aging of our population, the size the workforce continues to decrease. Living in a rural area limits employment opportunities and increases the costs of commuting to the service centers where many of the newly created jobs are located. Our local government should strive to encourage and maintain appropriate development that will better employ residents. Growth needs to be channeled to areas of town capable of handling development while incurring minimal cost to the municipality.

**Housing**

Analysis of housing data from the 1980, 1990 and 2000 censuses revealed that the 1990 census significantly undercounted seasonal housing in Cooper. For instance, if one only looks at the change between 1990 and 2000, seasonal units increased by 60 units or 157.9%. However, according to the 1980 census there were 81 seasonal units in Cooper but only 38 seasonal units in the 1990 census. According to the Cooper assessment records, there were no large losses of seasonal units between

1980 and 1990. So it seems likely that census workers in April of 1990 did not know of (or bother to find) over 40 seasonal units. These units were probably located on camp roads when ice was still on the lake and seasonal roads were deeply rutted with mud. Seasonal units increased from 81 to 98 units in the 20 year period between 1980 and 2000. This is only a 21% increase and not the huge apparent increase if only the 1990 and 2000 census numbers are compared. Given the very large inaccuracies evident in the 1990 census of seasonal housing in Cooper, any analysis of growth trends in housing in Cooper must include the 1980 census even after the 2010 census is complete.

Affordable housing is often defined as not costing more than 30% of household income. The data reviewed demonstrate first that town level data is not available. However within the Calais Labor Market Area (LMA) housing market the cost of housing is not affordable for most people (75%) in the community. The home price that could be afforded at the housing market median household income of \$29,979 was \$87,601. Those with lower incomes, approximately 75% percent of households in Cooper, are losing access to the housing market and the price of real estate in Cooper is increasing.

Existing land use ordinances do not impose significant costs on the cost of building homes and the majority of people live in owner-occupied single-family housing. The desire for vacation homes on waterfront properties by non-residents has raised the value, and assessment, of many properties in Cooper. There is a range of new housing in town, including mobile or manufactured homes. The percentage of homes owned by those in the workforce is likely to decline further while the percentage of homes owned by retirees - both those from away and natives - will increase.

### **Transportation**

The transportation linkages in Cooper consist primarily of State Route 191. Our town is reliant on its road network as the primary means of transportation movement. Overall, the public roadways in Cooper are in poor to fair condition. Route 191, the main travel way is in very poor condition. The shoulders are unpaved and very soft, the ditches are deep and the edge of road surface is crumbling in several locations. Route 191 serves as the primary arterial between the two most populated centers of the county, Machias and Calais, and between the international border and coastal Washington County. The volume of heavy truck traffic is enormous and it is traversing a road that was never designed or constructed to accommodate their volume or their weight. The result is unsafe conditions particularly at night and in severe weather.

The road surface has deteriorated (multiple longitudinal cracks, eroding shoulders and road surface) and is nearly impossible to maintain in winter weather because of extensive longitudinal tire ruts that create an undulating road profile from shoulder to shoulder. A very short stretch of Route 191 on Cooper Hill was reconstructed (with 4 foot shoulders) in the summer of 2010 and a significantly longer area was only resurfaced (no shoulders). Many of the portions that were resurfaced will return very quickly to their previous condition with the weight of trucks and winter weather.

Information from the state which classifies roads as town owned or private is antiquated. Research is necessary to clarify actual road status. Town Source material has not been accessible. Since town records have been, and will continue to be transferred to a new, accessible location, we will be able to adequately conduct our research, and will update our data.

Since MDOT has jurisdiction over most main roads and one bridge within Cooper, the town will continue to communicate and cooperate with the department. The town requires all new roads to be constructed to specific municipal standards.

**Public Facilities and Services**

Through proper maintenance and investment, Cooper's public facilities and services have remained in good condition overall. However Route 191 is in serious disrepair because it was never fully constructed for the truck and vehicle traffic that it receives. More discussion on this issue is provided in the Transportation chapter.

Cooper has many recreational opportunities because of the vast natural resources of the Town and the region, and a few municipal recreational facilities. Some of the Town's most important recreational resources rely on waterfront access, which we should seek to maintain and improve. Scenic view protection is particularly important to Cooper residents.

Although the town has not previously established a formal Capital Improvement Plan, reserve accounts have been used for many necessary items and a CIP is proposed in this Comprehensive Plan.

**Fiscal Capacity**

Cooper has been doing very well in managing its finances over the last five years and the mil rate has remained within a consistent range. In the past, the town has budgeted for capital improvements through the use of grant funds and local revenues. A new reserve account was approved at town meeting this year (2008) for potential expenses associated with renovation of the Grange, if needed, and a Capital Investment Plan is now proposed as part of the Comprehensive Plan. The town has kept funds in surplus in the past to cover capital improvements and will now formally create a capital investment reserve account with some of these funds.

**Land Use**

Cooper is feeling development pressure associated with conversion of residential second home subdivisions along lakefronts. Support exists for regulation on development activity but there is some concern that it not be excessive or burdensome. This plan is intended to protect the town's character and to direct residential and commercial activities to appropriate areas. It also seeks to ensure that residents can continue to support themselves with a mixture of activities necessitated by seasonal and diverse rural livelihoods.

**Town Survey**

In early 2009 Cooper residents completed a survey to give their views on important aspects of the town's future. The participation rate was high (29.6% response rate) for surveys of this type and included a great deal of written input.

Questions on housing in the survey were focused on the types of strategies towns can implement to make housing more affordable to residents. Respondents generally did not favor dimensional regulations that allowed greater density. Neither did they favor areas in growth areas for mobile home parks though opinions were not as strong against this concept as they were against regulatory

options. Respondents do favor allowing accessory apartments and participating in a regional affordable housing coalition. Opinions were mixed on creating a community affordable housing committee.

On questions about desired types of economic activity respondents strongly supported home based businesses. Also supported were professional business and some retail uses. All of the development associated with recreational facilities, recreational equipment sales and services, guiding and seasonal camping were strongly favored. Casino and gaming facilities were not favored, nor were adult entertainment facilities. Consistent with this sentiment, respondents favor low scale tourism developments rather than large operations like resorts. One of the most strongly disfavored activities was salvage and junk facilities. Particularly supported was a gas station and convenience store. The written comments speak to a desire for small scale operations in keeping with the quiet rural nature of the town as did the responses to different types of agriculture.

Several questions asked about local roads and transportation. Respondents are generally satisfied with summer road conditions though they are less satisfied with winter road conditions. Opinions on investments for road improvements were varied. Adding shoulders was strongly supported as were improvements for stormwater run-off from town roads into Cooper Lakes. Support for coordination among towns to seek ways to improve Route 191 was significant.

Respondents were asked how much they favored/disfavored investment in their preservation priorities and in community services and then to choose 3 of their highest priorities. In summary the two highest were restoration/renovation of the Cathance Grange and constructing a new town office/community building. The next highest priority for town investments was to discontinue winter maintenance of all unpaved town roads.

Respondents were generally satisfied with town and regional/community services or had no opinion about them. Respondents are also generally satisfied with other services while many are dissatisfied with the availability of high speed (broadband) internet access. The condition of the cemeteries was found satisfactory by most as was the recycling center/landfill/transfer station though there were some who are strongly dissatisfied with it. Most are satisfied with the property tax level though there were many who were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied.

Respondents to the survey expressed support for the town to prevent uncontrolled development through development of a zoning ordinance and a noise control ordinance. Specific provisions in a future zoning ordinance generated a range of opinions. Disallowing development in areas identified as having particular scenic significance was strongly supported. Including provisions that could attract business to Cooper was supported as was requiring that commercial development be in concentrated areas. Requiring residential development to be in concentrated areas was not supported nearly as much and many had no opinion on the idea. Many also had no opinion on adding lighting controls to shield off property glare.

Opinions on regionalization were generally positive particularly for regional ambulance services. Support for coordination among towns to seek ways to improve Route 191 was significant. Participation in a regional airport authority was polarized with many expressing no opinion perhaps because they did not understand what it means for the town. Re-consideration of the de-organization

of town government did not have a majority of support though some still think it deserves consideration. Future annexation of land from unorganized territory received very mixed opinions with many expressing no opinion at all. Again, this may result from a lack of understanding of what such annexation would look like or mean for the town.

**Regional Coordination**

Cooper has a long history of cooperation with adjoining towns and multiple towns in the region. This activity is strongest in the sharing of public facilities and municipal services as the cost savings are often most clearly realized in these areas. Cooper is very active on regional committees and authorities dealing with solid waste, emergency response, watershed management and economic development. These activities will continue with a strong emphasis on regional transportation policy, facilities sharing and infrastructure development (high speed broadband Internet in particular).

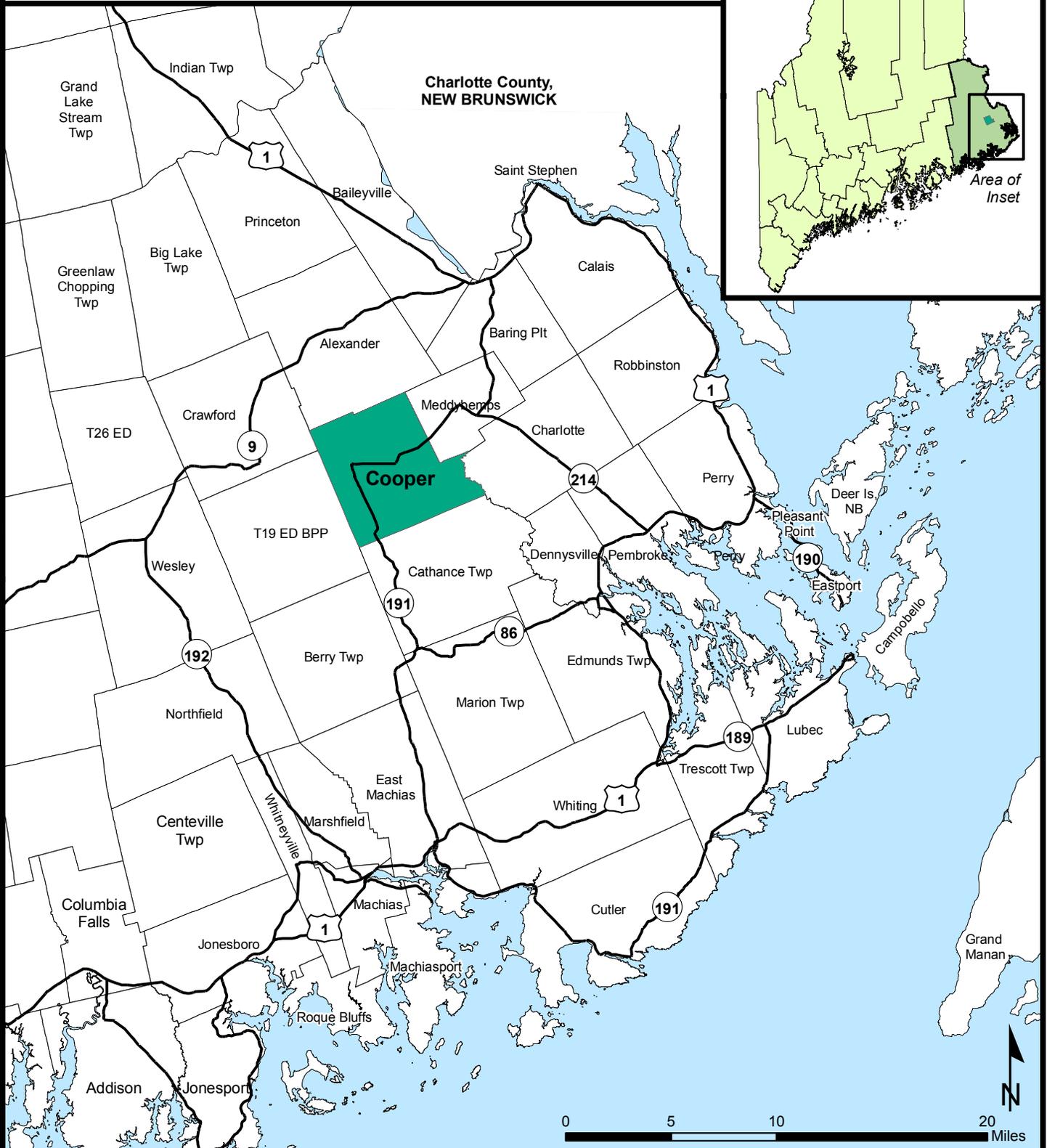
**Map Disclaimer:**

The information used to create the maps in this Comprehensive Plan have been derived from multiple sources. The map products as provided are for reference and planning purposes only and are not to be construed as legal documents or survey instruments. WCCOG provides this information with the understanding that it is not guaranteed to be accurate, correct or complete; that it is subject to revision; and conclusions drawn from such information are the responsibility of the user. Due to ongoing road renaming and addressing, the road names shown on any map may not be current. Any user of the maps accept same AS IS, WITH ALL FAULTS, and assumes all responsibility for the use thereof, and further agrees to hold WCCOG harmless from and against any damage, loss, or liability arising from any use of the maps.

# Cooper Comprehensive Plan Washington County, Maine

Data Sources:  
Maine Office of GIS  
Garmin GPS Receiver  
Universal Transverse  
Mercator- Zone 19N  
North American Datum- 1983

## MAP 1: Location



## B. HISTORY

The major events of Cooper's past have been summarized in this section from local texts, newspaper accounts, and from the recollections of residents.

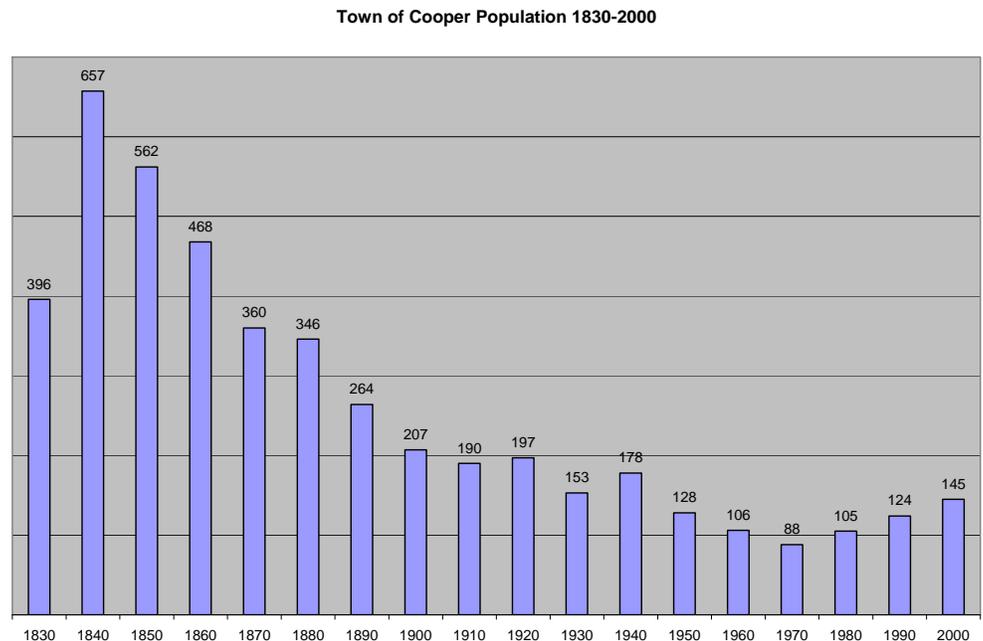
### Native Americans and Early Settlement

Undoubtedly, Native Americans traveled through and seasonally resided in this place we now call Cooper. They would have used the waters of the East Machias, Dennys and St. Croix watersheds, not only as transportation routes, but also as sources for food. The town of Cooper was known as Township 15 – E Division in the late 1700s. In the 1790's, "Lottery Townships" sold for 20 cents an acre. At age 24, General John Cooper was appointed High Sheriff and jailer for all of Washington County and was the principal owner of "wild land" in Township No 15 – E division, now known as Cooper. He settled Cooper in 1816 and his grave is located in the General Cooper Cemetery on private property near the Cathance Grange (see Map 2).

A portion of what is now the town of Meddybemps was part of Township 15 and formed the northeast corner of Cooper. The town of Meddybemps was incorporated in 1842 from parts of the Plantation of Baring and the towns of Cooper and Charlotte.

Early settlement in Cooper took place in three areas including Grove (where the Cathance Grange still stands), East Ridge and West Ridge. Subscribers to the Atlas of 1881 lists families still resident in Cooper and eastern Washington County with roads and lakes named after them: Averil, Day Farmer, Dewey, Ellis, Foster, Doten, Howe, Saddler, Sawyer, Smith and Vining. They were listed at first as "farmer" and also as lumbermen, mechanics, selectmen and town treasurer.

Population peaked in 1840 and declined precipitously until starting an upward climb with the 'back to the land' movement of the 1970s and the vacation/retirement settlement along lakefront properties of more recent decades.



Source: Fogler Library Maine Census Population Totals, 2008

**Government and Industry**

General Cooper built a sawmill and grist mill in 1816 at a cost of \$200. He eventually built a substantial residence which stood until it was destroyed by fire in 1976 (A-CHA Newsletter, Special Issue, March 1996). Cooper was incorporated as a town on February 6, 1822. Families supported themselves with sawmills and agriculture.

**Education**

In 1825, three years after the town was incorporated, Cooper had three school districts and one hundred scholars. This required \$100 in taxpayer support. At that time, the town only needed taxpayer money to fund three things: county taxes, keeping the paupers, and teacher salaries. Room and board for the teachers (as well as the paupers) was often put out to bid (A-CHA Newsletter, February, 1995). At the peak of its population, in the late 1800s, Cooper had six one-room schoolhouses. The West Ridge School was closed in the 1920s, the North Union School closed in 1942 and the East Ridge School was the last one to close its doors in 1957. This structure is the only one still standing and is in use as a residence.

**Religion**

Early records indicate that there were several small churches in the mid-1800s though none now remain standing. The most substantial church was a Congregational church built in 1835. It caught fire and was destroyed in 1912 when adjacent blueberry fields were burned. An 1861 map shows a site for a Baptist church. This site has also been referred to as “lightning place”. Historical folklore indicates that there were three attempts to build a church on this site. Each time the building neared completion, it either blew down or fell down. This was taken as an omen and the project and the site were abandoned (A-CHA Newsletter, November, 1994). Since the destruction of the last church building in 1912, various religious services have been held in the schools, the Grange Hall, or at times in private homes. Cooper residents now travel to neighboring communities to attend church services.

**Farming and Forestry Industries**

In the 1800s Cooper residents earned their living primarily from lumbering and agriculture and they continue to be the primary sources of income for many. The means of conducting agriculture and lumber operations has changed considerably with the shift from manual to mechanized and motorized methods.

According to the Calais Advertiser of September 6, 1860 as quoted by Harold Davis in An International Community on the St. Croix, “... Crawford, Cooper, Baileyville and Alexander were towns where farming took up four months, logging took up four months, and loafing around ... the remainder of the year. The towns were cursed with enough timber to destroy thrifty farming, yet not enough to make prosperous lumbering. Young men grew up with an axe and pick pole in hand, and after trying the sociability of working in large crews, or on the rivers driving logs had no relish for picking up stones alone on a ten acre lot...”

Farming in most of the nineteenth century did not produce much, if any cash income. However, farming was central to the livelihood of Cooper people from the first settler until after World War II. In reality, the early farm family produced food for the table, fiber for clothing, fuel for cooking and heating, and lumber for structures to house the family and their animals.

The invention about 1880 of the separator brought about a change in farming. Farmers purchased dairy cows then separated the milk into cream and skim milk. The skim milk was used to feed hogs, which became food for the family or were turned into cash. The cream went to the International Creamery collection building on the Cooper Road in Alexander, known as the North Union Road as it leaves the town of Cooper. Their plant in Calais turned cream into butter which was shipped to the big cities along the East Coast. There were 4 dairy farms on the North Union Road and others in Cooper but none remain today. A grist mill was located at Mill Pond. Long after it fell out of use, local historian Justin Day noticed the mill stone lying on the ground and becoming overgrown with vegetation. He arranged for a pulp loader to recover the stone and it is now preserved for posterity at the Cooper Fire Station.

Improvements in apple genetics allowed farmers to plant orchards, and ship barrels of the apples to the cities. Before 1880, most apples grown here were used for vinegar, cider, and animal food. Many orchards were destroyed in May 1935 when a major winter freeze killed many trees and this source of income.

Blueberries are one of only three fruits native to this area, the others were cranberries and grapes. Native Americans knew that burning the fields in spring helped the crop and they dried blueberries for pemmican, as well. During the Civil War, berries were hand-picked and hand canned & soldered for shipping to the Union Army. Berries were also hand picked (for 2 cents a quart) and shipped by schooner in one quart wooden firkins to Boston (the trip took 2 1/2 days). As we enter the twenty-first century, blueberries are the only commercial farm crop in Cooper. The economic value of these blueberry producing fields give Cooper its wonderful open areas and scenic views. There are currently about 1100 acres still in blueberry production (See Map 6 – Land Cover) none of which are irrigated.

The forests that surrounded the farms provided cash income for the residents. Men would spend the winter in Cooper cutting pines and moving the logs to the waterways for driving to the mills in spring. Drives took place on Cathance Lake and down the Dennys River. By the Civil War, pine was about gone and the men had to go up the St. Croix or up the Machias to work in logging crews on those watersheds. Some also took part in the river drives. By 1880 men turned to logging spruce along the same watersheds, and to working in the bark woods. There was no tannery in Cooper, but some were employed in tanneries at Princeton and Grand Lake Stream.

Early sawmills provided for the local market. In the 1800s there were mills in North Union off Dead Stream and at the end of West Ridge. Another mill off Whiff Hill operated until 1950. A lathe and shingle mill also operated on Old Mill Road. None are currently active.

During the first half of the twentieth century farmers cut and sold firewood in Woodland and Calais, and cut pulpwood for St. Croix Paper Company in Woodland. Some supplemented their income

cutting and shaving hoops and bounty hunting for porcupines. Many families also ate venison year-around.

Few residents currently cut lumber as an exclusive source of income. Lumber that is cut is trucked all over the state to obtain the best market price. The Domtar mill in Baileyville, 23 miles to the north and east is major source of employment in Cooper. Other uses of the forest include tipping by landowners or by lease to those seeking access to raw material for wreath making or for sale to larger wreath makers. Christmas trees were also produced historically but are now overgrown.

### **Historic Structures and Land Use Activities**

With few exceptions, all the structures built in Cooper during the nineteenth century were related to the farm; the single family home that might house three generations of the one family, the barn(s), and other outbuildings necessary for farming. The exceptions were the schoolhouses, the Churches, logging camps, and the few small mills.

There were two logging camps. One was located on the Love Lake Road known at the time as the "City's chopping road" due to it's use between the 1920s and 1940s by the city of Calais for logging work by those receiving general assistance from the City. This land is now encumbered by the Sunrise Easement held by the New England Forestry Foundation. The other logging camp was located across from the former landfill and operated in the 1940s by Sheriff Ray Foster who brought prisoners to work in the woods.

The oldest house still standing in Cooper was built in 1850s on Dodge Road. It is still used as a residence. Several other homes date back to the late 1800s including the Abiah Day homestead on East Ridge. A Civil War Veteran, Abiah Day died in 1948 and is buried across Route 191 in a private cemetery at the corner of an open field on land owned by his grandson Justin Day.

Many old farm houses and buildings have long since fallen in or burned. In the early 1900s many farmers headed west and open lands and hayfields started growing back to brush and forest. Local historian Justin Day estimates that over 1000 acres of hayfield have grown back to forest in the last century. He says that the woodlands are full of scattered rock piles, stone walls, cellar holes and abandoned wells. The only remaining open land in Cooper of any significance is blueberry land.

There are very few public or community buildings in Cooper. The exceptions are the Cathance Grange, built in 1911, and still standing though in need of restoration, and the Cooper Fire House, built in 1968. The Cooper Fire Department was started in 1968 with the construction of the Fire House and the purchase of a 1957 International fire engine from Laconia, NH.

Until the early 1980s dwellings on Cathance Lake were primarily seasonal. In the past 25 years many of these smaller cottages have been renovated into year round homes.

### **Transportation**

In 1898 the Washington County Railroad came to the area. Cooper residents had to travel to

Ayers Junction to reach the station for passenger travel as well as to ship timber on box cars. The use of the rail lines diminished substantially in the 1950's and 60's and the rail line was declared exempt in 1986. This was a result of more inexpensive trucking costs on the interstate highway system.

Before the arrival of the automobile, a trip between Machias and Calais took two days by horse and buggy and required a stop over. Cooper was the logical place to put up for the night. Catering to the needs of travelers was an early source of income for some residents. In fact the General Cooper house operated as an inn for such travelers. Automobiles came into use in the 1920s though travel was still slow.

### **SELECTED TIMELINE**

1790s	Lottery Townships sold for 20 cents per acre
1816	First settled by General John Cooper – Township 15 – E Division
1816	First sawmill and grist mill
1822	Incorporation as the Town of Cooper.
1825	Three school districts established.
1835	Congregational Church constructed
1840	Census population peak of 657 residents
1861	Map depicts Baptist Church
1898	Washington County railroad opens
1900	Two post offices in Cooper
1911-1912	Cathance Grange constructed
1912	Fire destroys last church in Cooper
1920s	West Ridge School closes
1935	Major freeze kills many apple trees
1942	North Union School closes
1957	East Ridge School closes
1967	Lowest population since incorporation – 67 residents
1968	Cooper Fire House constructed
1976	General John Cooper House destroyed by fire
1986	Calais Branch of railroad declared exempt
1988	Formation of Cathance Lake Association
1995	Postmistress retires; no longer any post office in Cooper
1996-2000	Multi-use recreational trails, i.e. hiking, jogging, ATV/snowmobiling tied into to Cooper

### **SELECTED REFERENCES**

- Community Analysis of Cooper, Maine. Mary Dunn, 1999.  
Alexander – Crawford Historical Society Newsletter (A-CHS). November 1994  
Alexander – Crawford Historical Society Newsletter (A-CHS). February 1995  
Alexander – Crawford Historical Society Newsletter (A-CHS). March 1996 (Special Issue)  
Interview – Justin Day, May 24, 2010

**HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND PLACES**

Early settlers usually built a log home with a dirt floor and a hole in the roof to let out the smoke. None of these primitive structures exist today. Settlers' permanent homes were built as soon as possible thereafter. There were post and beam frame houses. Being on the frontier, these homes were built by the owners who were farmers and loggers, not carpenters.

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission maintains an inventory of important sites including buildings or sites on the National Registry of Historic Places (NRHP). They record no such listings for the town and indicate that a comprehensive survey of Cooper's above-ground historic resources needs to be conducted in order to identify those properties which may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

**REHABILITATION GRANTS**

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program rewards private investment to rehabilitate certified historic structures (building listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places or a building located in a registered historic district and certified by the Secretary of the Interior as contributing to the historic significance of the district). The building must currently be used or will be used for commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential purposes, but not used exclusively as the owner's private residence. Under PL 99-514 Internal Revenue Code Section 47, tax incentives include:

- A 20% tax credit for certified rehabilitation of certified historic structures.
- A 10% tax credit for rehabilitation of non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936.

For both credits, the rehabilitation must be a substantial one. That is, during a 24-month period selected by the taxpayer, rehabilitation expenditures must exceed the greater of \$5,000 or the adjusted basis of the building and its structural components. And, the rehabilitation must involve a depreciable building. The National Park Service must approve, or "certify," all rehabilitation projects seeking the 20% rehabilitation tax credit. Owners seeking certification of rehabilitation work must complete the Historic Preservation Certification Application.

A Maine State taxpayer is allowed a credit equal to the amount of the Federal credit claimed by the taxpayer under section 47 of the Internal Revenue Code for rehabilitation of certified historic structures located in Maine. The credit is nonrefundable and is limited to \$100,000 annually per taxpayer.

**CEMETERIES**

Cemeteries are a cultural resource providing insight into the history of the community. There are five cemeteries maintained by the town. They are depicted on Map 2 Public Facilities and Transportation and include the following:

- West Ridge Cemetery
- East Ridge Cemetery
- Evergreen Cemetery
- Perkins Cemetery
- Creamer Cemetery

A sixth, the General Cooper Cemetery is located on private land near the Cathance Grange. There are several other private cemeteries in the town. Funds are raised annually for mowing, maintenance and veterans flags for the public cemeteries.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**

According to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) there are no known prehistoric archaeological sites located within Cooper. They indicate that a couple of professional surveys have been completed for utility corridors, and a portion of Cathance Lake shoreline on Birch Point has been surveyed. The MHPC notes that the remainder of the Cathance Lake shoreline, and the Dennys River valley need archaeological survey.

There is one known historic archeological site in Cooper, an unidentified farmstead known as the Dennys River Farmstead that is probably 19th -20th c. Local historian Justin Day suggests that this is the Haskell/Smith homestead. MHPC indicates that no professional survey for historic archeological sites has been conducted in Cooper. They indicate that future such fieldwork could focus on agricultural, residential, and industrial sites relating to the earliest Euro-American settlement of the town in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **THREATS TO EXISTING SITES**

The greatest threat to historic buildings and archaeological sites is the lack of knowledge among landowners. Many old buildings have been intentionally destroyed without measurements and photographs. Many cellars and wells are filled and leveled without first creating a GPS record.

**Historic Buildings:** The historic buildings that have been identified above are not protected within the provisions of existing land use regulations. Without the proper ordinances being in place, the loss or conversion of the remaining buildings is possible.

**Archaeological Sites:** The locations of some of the above referenced archaeological sites are protected under Shoreland Zoning and Flood Plain Management Ordinance provisions that have been adopted by the town.

## **Public Opinion Survey**

Respondents to the 2009 survey indicated very strong support for actions to renovate and restore the Cathance Grange.

**SUMMARY**

The history of Cooper is based upon the natural resources that drove the local and regional economy, including logging, and more recently, blueberries. Many current residents can trace their families back to the town's early days. Cooper enjoys many of the benefits from our past. It is a small town with a strong sense of community where people look out for one another. The town seeks to maintain a link to its heritage and support for development that retain the scale and appearance of the town as well as preserve its historic character.

# Cooper Comprehensive Plan Washington County, Maine

# MAP 2: Public Facilities & Transportation

Data Sources:  
Maine Office of GIS  
Garmin GPS Receiver  
Universal Transverse  
Mercator- Zone 19N  
North American Datum- 1983

- State Road
- Town Road\*
- - - - Town Road (Unpaved)\*
- - - - Private Unpaved Road\*
- Perennial Stream

\* Refer to pg G-9 regarding town & private roads.

### Transportation Data

- ⊕ Bridges
- AADT Traffic Volume
- Level of Service: A
- ▨ Very Poor Road Conditions
- 📷 Road Condition Photos  
See Chapter G - Transportation

### Civic & Public Facilities

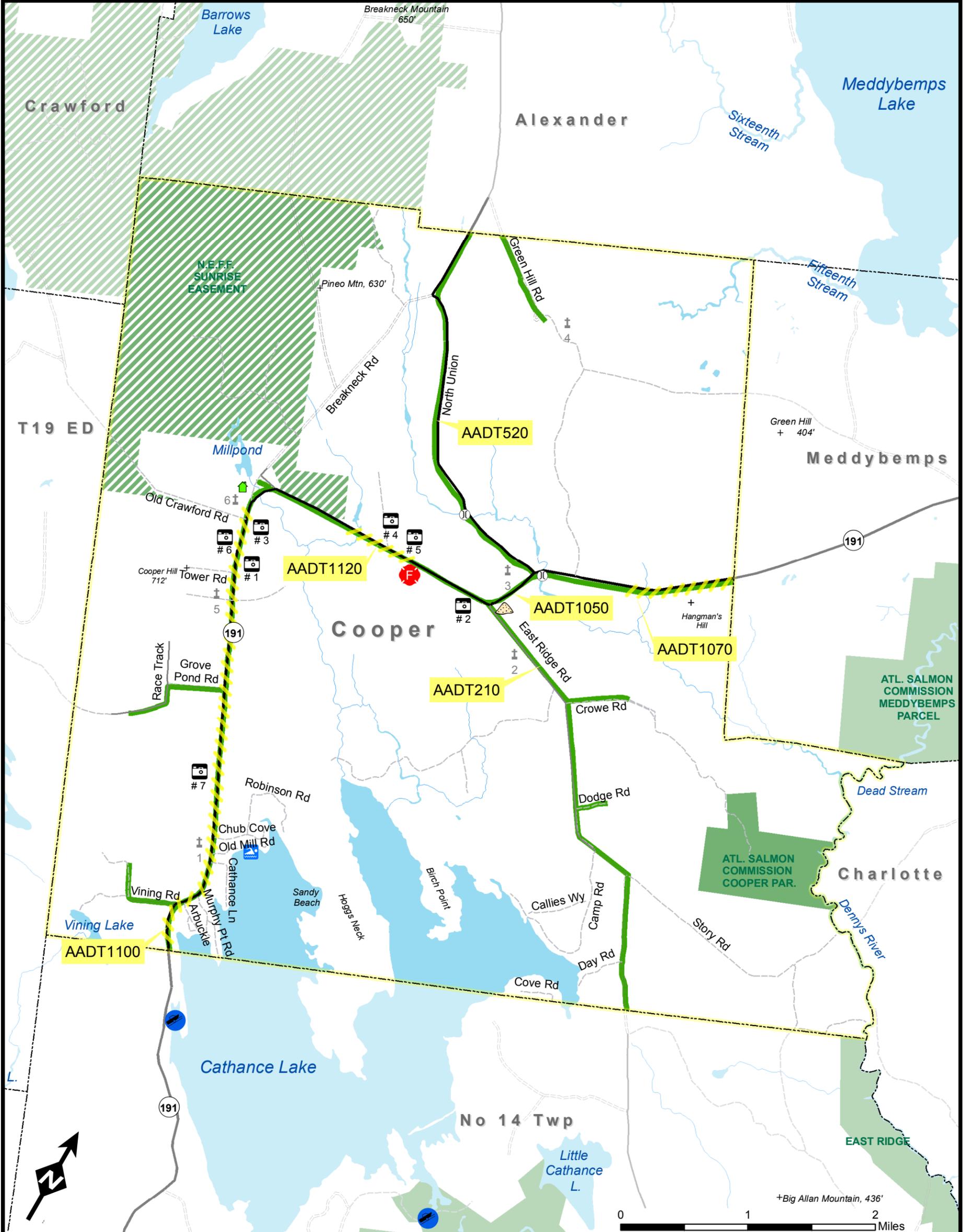
- 🚤 Boat Launch
- 🏡 Cathance Grange
- 🏖️ Cooper Town Beach
- 🏖️ Sand & Salt Pile
- 🎓 Schools
- 🚒 Fire Department

### Cemeteries

- 1 - West Ridge Cemetery
- 2 - East Ridge Cemetery
- 3 - Evergreen Cemetery
- 4 - Perkins Cemetery
- 5 - Creamer Cemetery
- 6 - General Cooper Cemetery\*

\* Located on private property.

- Conserved Land
- ▨ Conserv. Easement



# Cooper Comprehensive Plan Washington County, Maine

# MAP 2A: Vehicle Collisions 1996-2006

Data Sources:  
Maine Office of GIS  
Garmin GPS Receiver  
Universal Transverse  
Mercator- Zone 19N  
North American Datum- 1983

— State Road  
— Town Road\*  
- - - Town Road (Unpaved)\*  
- - - Private Unpaved Road\*  
— Perennial Stream

\* Refer to pg G-9 regarding town & private roads.

### Animal Collisions

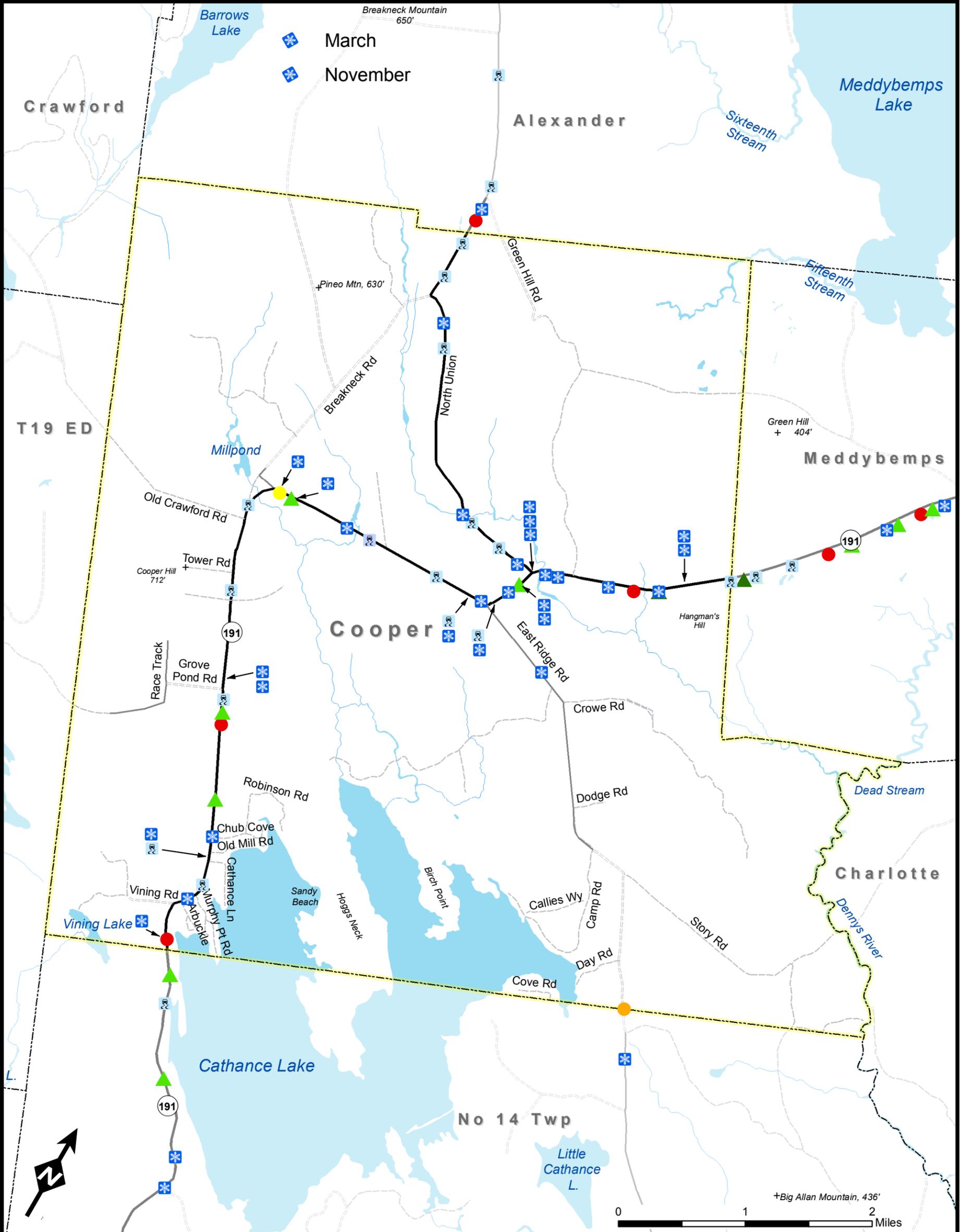
- ▲ Deer
- ▲ Moose
- ▲ All other animals

### Driving Collisions

- Head-on/sideswipe
- Intersection movement
- Rear end/sideswipe

### Ran Off Road

- ❄ Winter Conditions (November - March)
- ❄ Non-Winter Conditions (April - October)



## C. POPULATION

A comprehensive plan needs to provide for a proper relationship between the town's future population and its environment. Accordingly, most phases of the plan are either dependent upon, or strongly influenced by, the size and composition of the town's future population. This section examines past, current and projected population for Cooper.

### MIGRATION ANALYSIS

According to Census data Cooper's population increased by 21 persons during the last decade of the millennium. This increase can be attributed both natural increase and to in-migration. During the 1990s, Cooper recorded 17 deaths and 14 births and a net in-migration of 24 people. This increase is shown in the formula below.

1990 Census Population = 124

Plus the number of births to Cooper residents between 1990 and 2000 (14) = 138

Minus the number of deaths to Cooper residents between 1990 and 2000 (17) = 121

Plus in-migration (24) to attain the 2000 Census Population = 145

### POPULATION STATISTICS

#### Population and Growth Rates

Like its small rural neighbors the population of Cooper increased from 1990 to 2000. The larger centers nearby lost population, reflecting a trend seen in Washington County as a whole.

**Table C-1 Population of Cooper and Neighboring Communities**

	1990	2000	GPY 90-00	% growth
Alexander	478	514	0.75%	7.53%
Baileyville	2031	1686	-1.7%	-16.99%
Baring Plantation	275	273	-0.07%	-0.7%
Calais	3963	3447	-1.30%	-13.02%
Charlotte	271	327	2.10%	20.66%
<b>Cooper</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>1.69%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>
Crawford	89	108	2.13%	21.3%
East Central Unorganized Territory (Edmunds, Marion, Trescott, Twps 14, 18, 19)	661	768	1.62%	16.19%
East Machias	1218	1298	0.66%	6.6%
Machias	2569	2355	-0.83%	-8.33%
Meddybemps	133	150	1.28%	12.8%
Washington County	35,308	33,941	-0.39%	-3.87 %
State	1,227,928	1,274,923	-	3.83 %

Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census

The following table shows the year-round population and growth rate by decade in Cooper, Washington County and Maine since 1900.

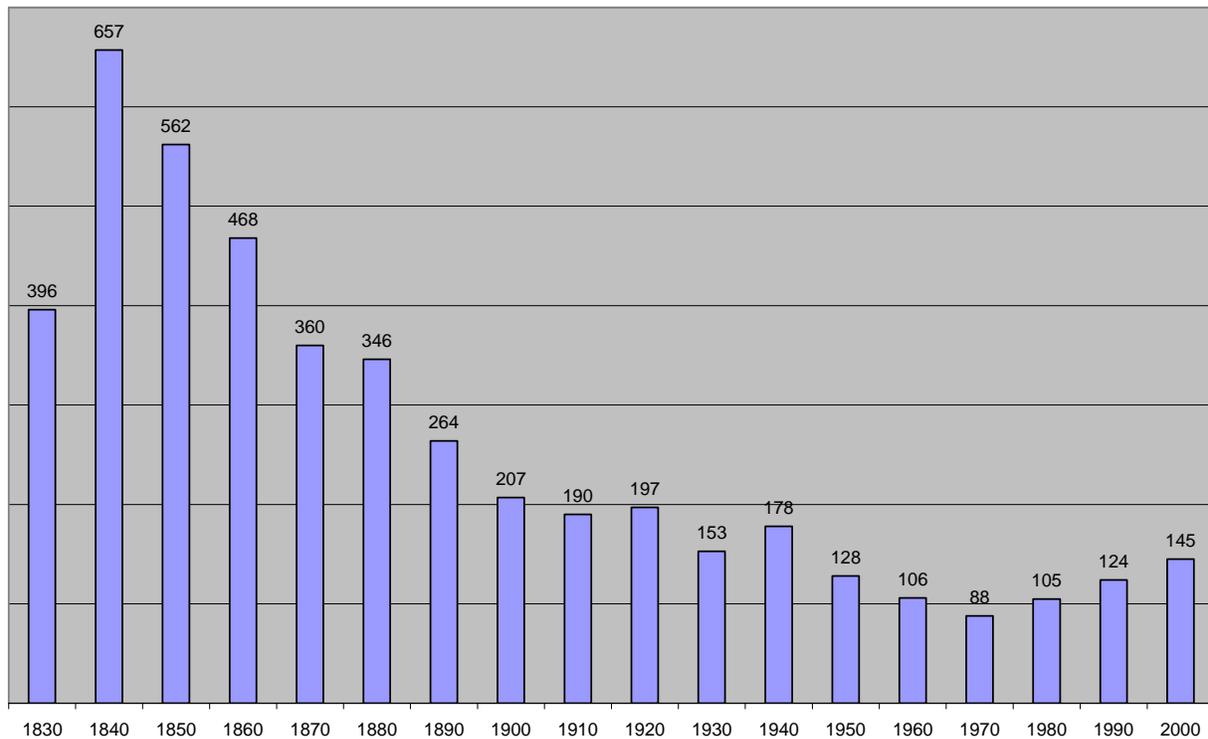
**Table C-2 Population and Growth Rates**

Year	Cooper		Washington County		Maine	
	Number	% Change	Number	% Change	Number	% Change
2000	145	16.9%	33,941	-3.87 %	1,274,923	3.83 %
1990	124	18.1%	35,308	0.99 %	1,227,928	9.18 %
1980	105	19.3%	34,963	17.09 %	1,124,660	13.37 %
1970	88	-17.0%	29,859	-9.27 %	992,048	2.35 %
1960	106	-17.2%	32,908	-6.48 %	969,265	6.07 %
1950	128	-28.1%	35,187	-6.83 %	913,774	7.85 %
1940	178	16.3%	37,767	-0.16 %	847,226	6.25 %
1930	153	-22.3%	37,826	-9.31%	797,423	3.83%
1920	197	3.7%	41,709	-2.79%	768,014	3.45%
1910	190	-8.2%	42,905	-5.14%	742,371	6.90%
1900	207	-21.6%	45,232	1.7%	694,466	5.0%
1890	264	-	44,482	-	661,087	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

As the following chart clearly shows, Cooper’s population peaked in the 1840s and then declined steadily until the 1970s when it started to increase again.

**Town of Cooper Population 1830-2000**



**Population Forecasts**

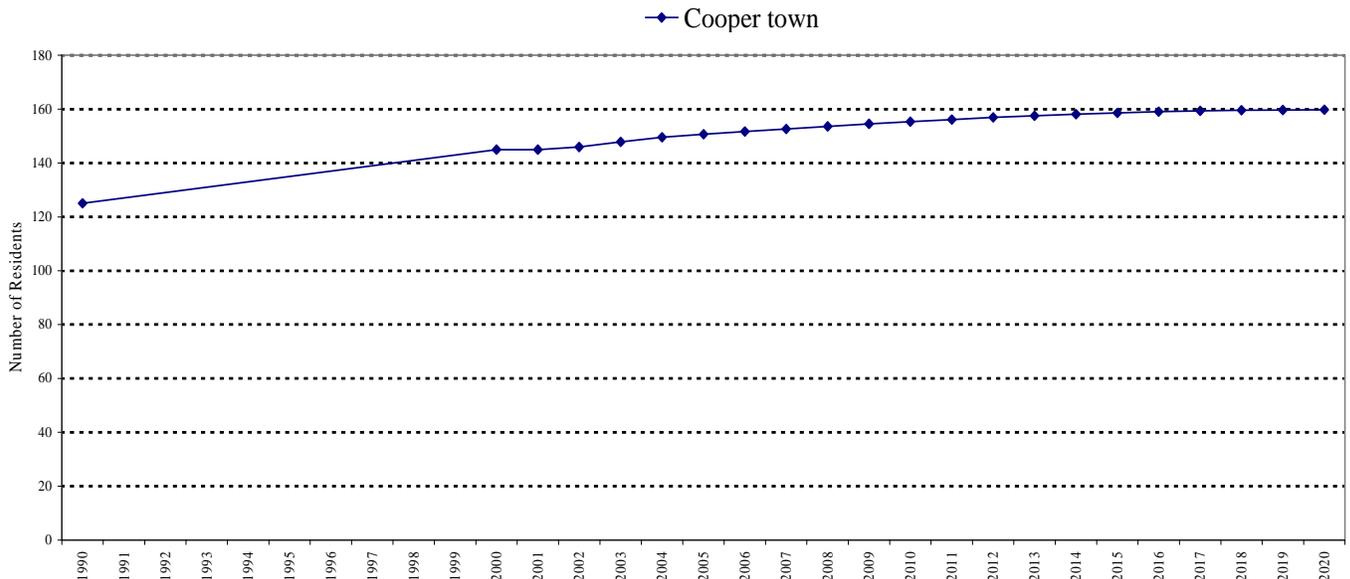
As the table and chart below depict, the State Planning Office predicts that the population of Cooper will rise to 148 individuals by 2010, to 151 by 2015 and to 152 individuals by 2020.

**Table C-3 Population Projections**

Year	Cooper		Washington County		Maine	
	Number	% Change	Number	% Change	Number	% Change
2020	152	0.7%	31,030	-3.1%	1,434,404	2.3%
2015	151	2.0%	32,021	-2.4%	1,401,553	2.8%
2010	148	6.5%	32,819	-1.9%	1,362,938	3.1%
2005	139	-4.1%	33,448	-1.4%	1,321,505	3.5%
2000	145	-	33,906	-	1,277,397	-

The 2000 information is an actual number from the U.S. Census and all others are projected by the State Planning Office.

1990 to 2000 Population Trend & Projected 2000 to 2020 Population Trend



Source: Maine State Planning Office analysis of 1990-2000; US Census Data

The town’s population has risen steadily in the past 40 years. The following analysis compares the analysis above provided by SPO with both a rate of growth calculation and linear regression analysis. The analyses that best reflect the SPO projection are those that base their estimates on the last 30-50 years of Cooper’s population fluctuations. During the 1990s, an increase of 1.69% percent per year occurred. If that trend continued, Cooper would increase to 194 persons in 2020 (or 187, using linear regression). If, however, a higher annual rate of growth is observed (2.16% percent per year) as occurred over the longer term from 1970 to 2000 then the population of the

town would increase to a total of 208 persons by the year 2020 (or 182, using linear regression). The average annual rate of growth of 0.27% from the period from 1950 to 2000 reflects an initial period of decline followed by a steady increase. If the rate of growth reflected this kind of growth the population in 2020 would only grow to 153 (or 136 using linear regression). Changes in land use including new year-round residential development will determine actual population growth over the next ten years. A slight to modest population increase is most likely to occur over the next ten-year period.

**Table C-4 Linear Regression and Growth per Year Population Predictions**

Timeframe on which prediction is based	Average Growth Per Year (Non-Compounded)	Cooper Predictions for the year 2020	
		Using Average Growth Per Year (NC)	Using Simple Linear Regression
1950-2000	0.27%	153	136
1970-2000	2.16%	208	182
1990-2000	1.69%	194	187

### Seasonal Population

There are no state or federal statistics on seasonal population for Cooper. As a scenic, community with one large appealing lake, seasonal development has a significant impact on the community. Based on a total of 98 seasonal housing units reported in the 2000 Census, and using the average household size in 2000 of 2.59 persons per household approximately 253 additional persons may stay in Cooper seasonally. The Comprehensive Plan Committee, with knowledge of local business owners serving camp properties, estimates this number is actually somewhere between 300 and 400 individuals with a peak in July and August. Many camps are shared among several families and are occupied successively throughout the summer and others through November (hunting season).

### Population Projection Conclusions

Changes in economic activity and land use, including new year-round residential and commercial or industrial development, will determine actual population growth over the next ten to fifteen years. It is anticipated that seasonal property owners who choose to stay year round and retirees will account for some of the future increases in population. More information on household composition, the housing stock and recent building permit activity is provided in the chapter on housing. A slight to modest population increase over the next ten-year period is indicated by past trends. However, an adjustment in this upward trend may occur with recent significant increases in the price of fuel and other costs of living as well as the distance of the town of Cooper from medical, dental, retail, educational and other services.

### AGE DISTRIBUTION

The following 2000 statistics compare population by age groups for the town of Cooper, the county and the state.

Table C-5 Population by Age Groups

Age Group	Cooper		Washington		Maine	
	Numb	Percent	Numb	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5 years	4	2.8	1727	5.1	70726	5.5
5 to 9 years	11	7.6	2176	6.4	83022	6.5
10 to 14 years	16	11.0	2363	7.0	92252	7.2
15 to 19 years	11	7.6	2403	7.1	89485	7.0
20 to 24 years	4	2.8	1813	5.3	69656	5.5
25 to 34 years	14	9.7	3812	11.2	157617	12.4
35 to 44 years	28	19.3	5114	15.1	212980	16.7
45 to 54 years	25	17.2	5048	14.9	192596	15.1
55 to 59 years	6	4.1	1960	5.8	68490	5.4
60 to 64 years	8	5.5	1669	4.9	54697	4.3
65 to 74 years	14	9.7	3085	9.1	96196	7.5
75 to 84 years	3	2.1	2065	6.1	63890	5.0
85 years and over	1	0.7	706	2.1	23316	1.8
Median age (years)	40.3	-	40.5	-	38.6	-

Source: 2000 Census

The overall age structure of the population in Cooper is similar to the county and the state and reflects an aging population. This is reflected also in an increase in the median age of Cooper residents from 37.7 in 1990 to 40.3 in 2000.

Table C-6 Cooper Population by Age Year Comparisons

Age Group 1990			Age Group 2000		
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Under 5	10	8.1%	Under 5	4	2.8%
5-17	26	21.0%	5-17	32	22.1%
18-24	8	6.5%	18-24	10	6.9%
25-54	49	39.5%	25-54	67	46.2%
55-64	15	12.1%	55-64	14	9.7%
65 and older	16	12.9%	65 and older	18	12.4%
Median Age	37.7	-	Median Age	40.3	-

Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census

The older segment of the town's population (number of residents aged 65 or above) has remained the same at just over 12% of the population between 1990 and 2000. During the same time the number of school-aged residents of 5-17/19 years old increased slightly from 21 to 22 percent of the population. Local knowledge suggests that the decrease in the number of children under 5 between 1990 and 2000 may be indicative of the choices of only one or two households. Recent (since 2000) shifts in the number of school aged children indicate a level number of families moving in and out of Cooper. Again, rising fuel costs may force those now commuting to service centers for school and employment to move out of town.

**Table C-7 Cooper Population by Gender**

Year	Female	%	Male	%	Total
2000	75	51.7	70	48.3	145
1990	63	50.8	61	49.2	124

Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census

The ratio of females to males remained fairly constant between 1990 and 2000.

**Table C-8 Average Household Size and Growth Rate: 1990-2000**

	1990	2000	GPY 90-00	% growth
Alexander	2.97	2.62	-1.18%	-11.78%
Baileyville	2.64	2.32	-1.21%	-12.12%
Baring Plantation	2.72	2.42	-1.10%	-11.03%
Calais	2.44	2.24	-0.82%	-8.20%
Charlotte	2.79	2.41	-1.36%	-13.62%
<b>Cooper</b>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>-1.01%</b>	<b>-10.07%</b>
Crawford	2.41	2.63	0.91%	9.13%
East Central Unorganized Territory (Edmunds, Marion, Trescott, Twps 14, 18, 19)	2.63	2.44	-0.72%	-7.24%
East Machias	2.60	2.40	-0.77%	-7.69%
Machias	2.31	2.1	-0.91%	-9.09%
Meddybemps	2.46	2.24	-0.89%	-8.94%
Washington County	2.55	2.34	-0.82%	-8.2%
State	2.56	2.39	-	-6.6%

Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census

Similar to the trends of her neighbors and the county and state, the average household size in Cooper went down by 10.07%, indicating the presence of more households with fewer children. Given the increase in median age (3 years), it is likely that many of these households are 'empty nests' in which the children have grown up and moved out of Cooper.

**Table C-9 Number of Households**

	1990	2000	GPY 90-00	% growth
Alexander	161	196	2.17%	21.74%
Baring Plantation	101	113	1.19%	11.88%
Calais	1,536	1,486	-0.33%	-3.26%
Charlotte	97	134	3.81%	38.14%
<b>Cooper</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>3.02%</b>	<b>30.23%</b>
Crawford	37	41	1.08%	7.61%
East Central Unorganized Territory (Edmunds, Marion, Trescott, Twps 14, 18, 19)	251	315	2.55%	25.50%
East Machias	469	540	1.51%	15.14%
Machias	943	939	-0.04%	-0.42%
Meddybemps	54	67	2.41%	24.07%
Washington County	13418	14118	0.52%	5.22%
State	465312	518200	-	11.37%

Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census

The number of households has increased indicating indicative of more retiree, single person families. An increase in the number of households also occurred in most neighboring towns and throughout Washington County despite declining population indicating the presence of more single person, single parent, and retiree households countywide. Both services centers, Calais and Machias, saw a decrease in the number of households between 1990 and 2000, a trend that may be changing as those who commute from rural towns must pay more than double the cost for fuel as they paid in 2000.

**Table C-10 Education**

School Enrollment (aged 3 and up)	1990	1990 % Pop	2000	2000 % Pop
<b>Cooper</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10.48%</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>26%</b>
Washington County	8682	24.6%	8,044	23.7%
State	304,868	24.8%	321,041	25.2%

Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census

According to the 2000 Census, school enrollment has declined in the county, but has increased statewide. Contrary to the trend in Washington County, Cooper had 38 children enrolled in school in the year 2000, a significant increase since 1990. This figure reflects both an increase in elementary and high school enrollment (from 8 in 1990 to 26 in 2000) as well as an increase in post-secondary enrollment (from 5 in 1990 to 12 in 2000). Note that the census figures in Table C-10 are different from the school enrollment figures in Table C-11 because census figures on school enrollment include children in Head Start and pre-school as well as post secondary programs whereas public school enrollment is a measure of the K-12 student population.

**Table C-11 Public School Enrollment of Cooper Residents**

School Year	Elementary	Secondary	Total Cooper Enrollment
October, 2006	18	13	31
October, 2005	22	12	34
October, 2004	15	14	29
October, 2003	16	13	29
October, 2002	17	12	29
October, 2001	19	9	28
October, 2000	20	8	28

Source: Department of Education, 2008

The town's public school enrollment has grown in the last five years. Figures in Table C-11 account for Cooper residents only. There are no state statistics predicting future enrollment figures for the town. However, a slight decrease of public school enrollment is likely in the near term given the decrease in population under the age of 5.

**Table C-12 2001-02 Approved Home Instruction Pupils**

Town	KIND.	GR 1-8	GR 9-12	OTHER	TOTAL
Cooper	0	0	1	0	1

Source: Maine DOE

According to the Maine Department of Education, very few children are home schooled in Cooper, however the available data is over 5 years old.

**Table C-13 Trend in Home-Schooling**

Trend (# of Pupils)	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Cooper	0	3	0	1	1

Source: Maine DOE

Educational attainment in Cooper at the High School Graduate or higher and at the Bachelor's degree or higher level is higher than all surrounding towns and higher than both the county and the state averages.

**Table C-14 Educational Attainment 2000**

	Calais	Alexander	<b>Cooper</b>	Charlotte	Meddybemps	Washington Co. 2000	State 2000
	Percent	Percent	<b>Percent</b>	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
High School Graduate or higher	84.6	82.5	<b>96.2</b>	77.5	82	79.9	85.4
Bachelor's degree or higher	11.5	8.9	<b>25.7</b>	14.5	7.5	14.7	22.9

Note: Percent calculated from persons aged 25 and over.

Source: 2000 Census

## SUMMARY

The population of Cooper peaked early, in 1840 and then declined until the 1970s. It has increased steadily in the last 30 years. A slight to modest population increase over the next ten-year period is indicated by past trends. However, an adjustment in this upward trend may occur with recent significant increases in the price of fuel and other costs of living as well as the distance of the town of Cooper from medical, dental, retail, educational and other services. Contrary to the trend in Washington County, Cooper had 38 children enrolled in school in the year 2000, a significant increase since 1990. This figure reflects both an increase in elementary and high school enrollment (from 8 in 1990 to 26 in 2000) as well as an increase in post-secondary enrollment (from 5 in 1990 to 12 in 2000). Recent (since 2000) shifts in the number of school aged children indicate a level number of families moving in and out of Cooper. Again, rising fuel costs may force those now commuting to service centers for school and employment to move out of town.

There is a large and growing seasonal population. Like elsewhere in Washington County Cooper's population is aging. The overall age structure is similar and reflects an aging population. The number of households has increased indicative of more retiree, single person families. The town will continue to make available demographic information to residents in particular tracking any the shifts of existing seasonal housing and residents to year-round status.

## **D. NATURAL RESOURCES**

Cooper is a small rural town rich in natural resources. Of particular importance to town residents are Cathance and Vining Lake. Cathance Lake is considerably larger than Vining Lake and more than half of it extends south into the unorganized territory of Cathance Township. Canoeing and boating is available from a single town access point on Cathance Lake and provides a pleasant experience among Maine communities. Cathance Lake is visible to the traveler along Route 191 from Cooper Hill but shoreline development is not particularly evident as much of the land is forested.

Information on natural resources is necessary to protect environmentally sensitive areas, and to identify opportunities and constraints for development. The natural resources of our town contribute greatly to our quality of life. They provide open space, habitat, and recreational opportunities such as fishing, boating, ATV/snowmobiling, hunting, canoeing, hiking, and cross-country skiing, as well as other activities.

The goal of this section is to protect the quality and manage the quantity of Cooper's natural resources, as well as to safeguard the forest resources that support our economy.

### **LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

The town of Cooper is located in the eastern part of Washington County, Maine. The town is situated approximately 100 miles east of Bangor and is bordered on the north by the towns of Alexander and Crawford, on the east by the towns of Meddybemps and Charlotte, and on the west and south by the unorganized territories of Berry Township, Cathance Township (formerly Townships 18 and 14 respectively) and Township 19. The land area of the town is approximately 20,837 acres (see Map 6: Land Cover).

Cooper is located in a region of massive granite intrusion that was glaciated in the Wisconsin age. The glacier caused till (unsorted, poorly drained soil) to be deposited over the entire region. This poorly drained till formed bogs and ponds and altered the drainage pattern. The topography in these areas is generally a blanket deposit that conforms to the underlying bedrock topography. However, the underlying granite caused the till to be more thickly deposited on the northwest sides of ridges: on the southeast sides boulders were "plucked" and transported further south. Thick till deposits are also found in bedrock "valleys" and depressions. The weight of the ice (in some places a mile thick) caused the land to be depressed in relation to the level of the sea. Marine sediments (silts and clays) were deposited in valleys and more sheltered locations. The release of pressure due to the melting allowed the land to rise slowly. This explains why silt and clay deposits can be found at elevations of 100 feet or more.

Thin drift, which makes up about 40 percent of the town's land area, consists of bedrock outcrops and/or thin surficial deposits. The topography here reflects the configuration of the bedrock surface, and ranges from smooth undulating hills to knobby terrain and higher ridges. See Map 3: Topography and Steep Slopes at the end of this section for general contour elevations.

## **LAND SUITABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Cooper has no sewerage or public water facilities. Development depends on the private provision and maintenance of safe and adequate septic systems and wells. Septic systems should always be designed and constructed carefully, but this is especially crucial when such systems are placed in areas with poorly drained soils, shallow bedrock soils, and soils with high water tables. Development on poorly suited soils is the underlying cause of many environmental and economic problems. A community pays for improper land use through water pollution, high mitigation and maintenance costs on individual wells and public services, closure of swimming areas, and destruction of existing wildlife and scenic areas.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service (SCS) released digital soil classification maps for Washington County in 2007. Soils in Cooper are of several types: glacial till thinly deposited in the uplands; thick glacial till on northwest slopes and in bedrock depressions; marine silts and clays in the valleys and more sheltered locations, and glacial outwash or ice contact sands and gravels. These soils are not generally well suited to septic sewage disposal. Some are well suited to forestry.

Soils in Cooper are depicted on Map 5 – Soils Classification and include soil suitability indices that predict suitability for development based on soil characteristics that influence the cost of construction. Prime agricultural soils are also noted on Map 5.

### **Soil Potential for Low Density Development (LDD)**

Very few areas of Cooper, or indeed of Maine in general, have large tracts of land that are ideal for residential development. The Natural Resources Conservation Service of the USDA has produced a handbook of Soil Survey Data for Growth Management in Washington County. The soil suitability indices on Map 5 – Soils Classification are interpreted from this publication

The rating of soil potential for low density urban development – provided in the legend on Map 5 - is used to guide the concentration of development in the growth areas in Cooper. Under this system soil potentials are referenced to an individual soil within the county that has the fewest limitations to development (depth to water table, bedrock etc.). This reference soil is given a value of 100 points. Costs that are incurred to overcome limitations to development are developed for all other soils. These costs, as well as costs associated with environmental constraints and long term maintenance, are converted to index points that are subtracted from the reference soil. The result is a comparative evaluation of development costs for the soils in the county. The overall range is large with values between 0 and 100. These numerical ratings are separated into Soil Potential Rating Classes of very low to very high. Thus a soil with a Very High rating has very good potential for development.

These maps and the data available from the Soil Conservation Service are useful to the town to predict the sequence of development; develop future land use plans and update zoning. They also indicate areas where streets or sewers may be prohibitively costly and identify where environmentally sensitive land should be protected. Individuals can learn problems or development costs associated with a piece of land and the advantage of one piece of land over

another prior to purchase. The information will help answer whether the site can support a septic system, if the basement will always be wet, if there is a high potential for erosion, and the bearing capacity of the soil.

Soil survey maps do not eliminate the need for on-site sampling, testing, and the study of other relevant conditions (for example, pockets of different soils having completely different qualities may be present), but they are an important first step that should precede development decisions.

### **Highly Erodible Soils**

The removal of surface vegetation from large areas of land can cause erosion, which is a major contributor of pollution to surface waters. Highly erodible soils have a potential to erode faster than normal. Soil composition affects its susceptibility to erosion but the combined effects of slope length and steepness are the greatest contributing factors when identifying highly erodible soils.

Most development and intensive land use can and should take place on areas with slopes of less than 15 percent (representing an average drop of 15 feet or less in 100 feet horizontal distance). On slopes greater than 15 percent, the costs of roads, foundations and septic, sewer and other utility systems rise rapidly. Map 3: Topography, Steep Slopes and Flood Zones depicts the location of steep slopes in Cooper.

### **FARM AND FOREST LAND**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines prime farmland as the land that is best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce a sustained high yield of crops while using acceptable farming methods. Prime farmland produces the highest yields and requires minimal amounts of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment. Prime farmland is also often targeted as prime property for low-density residential development. Very few of the soils in Cooper are listed as Prime Farmland, the exception being a few areas along Route 191, East Ridge and Union Road as depicted on Map 5 – Soils. Several others are classified as Prime Farmland but only if either drained or irrigated.

### **Blueberry production**

The most significant agricultural activity in Cooper is blueberry production. There are approximately 1100 acres in blueberry production (See Map 6 – Land Cover) none of which are irrigated. While the soils in Cooper are not ideal for many agricultural uses, they are well suited for blueberry production and this activity provides some employment in town.

### Woodland Productivity

Maine's forests and forest industry still play a vital role in the state's economy, especially in Northern and Eastern Maine. Forested areas provide an abundant and diverse wildlife population for the use and enjoyment of all Maine citizens. Furthermore, the forest protects the soil and water and contributes to a wide variety of recreational and aesthetic experiences. The forest provides a wide variety of wildlife habitats for both game and non-game species. Loss of forestland can be attributed to development and to irresponsible harvesting techniques. When forestland ownership is fragmented, public access becomes more restricted due to increased land posting. To optimize forestland use, forests should be effectively managed and harvested.

Soils rated with a woodland productivity of medium or above are qualified as prime forestland soils. This designation does not preclude the development of these lands but only identifies the most productive forestland. These soils are rated only for productivity and exclude management problems such as erosion hazard, equipment limitations or seedling mortality. Cooper's important forest and farmland are shown on Map 6: Land Cover.

Timber harvesting is an important economic activity in Cooper and is conducted mostly through selection harvest but also by shelter wood, and clearcut methods, see Table D-1.

Table D-1 - SUMMARY OF TIMBER HARVEST INFORMATION, COOPER

YEAR	Selection harvest, acres	Shelterwood harvest, acres	Clearcut harvest, acres	Total Harvest, acres	Change of land use, acres	Number of timber harvests
1991-1994	365	40	45	450	0	7
1995	490	0	0	490	0	4
1996	350	10	23	383	0	5
1997	290	0	20	310	20	4
1998	544	0	0	544	0	3
1999	861	65	0	926	0	7
2000	79	75	0	154	0	9
2001	173	0	0	173	0	8
2002	40	0	10	50	10	11
2003	70	0	0	70	1	5
2004	181	0	0	181	1	8
2005	170	0	0	170	0	8
2006	270	350	0	620	0	9
Total	3,883	540	98	4,521	32	88

Source: Year End Landowner Reports to Maine Forest Service, 2008 (Note: to protect confidential landowner information, data is reported only where three or more landowner reports reported harvesting in the town)

It appears to the Comprehensive Plan Committee that several large and heavily cut areas are either unreported or not apparent in the table. The observation that the reported data under represents the amount of heavy cutting in Cooper is supported by the Land Cover data from 2006 (Map 6) which indicates substantially greater acreage that is heavily cut. There are areas of particular concern around Cathance Lake.

## Changes in Forestland Ownership and Use

As in other parts of Washington County large industrial forest-land holdings have changed hands in the past few years. In 2006, 2,250 acres of industrial forestland in Cooper formerly owned by Georgia Pacific was transferred to Typhoon LLC and is now restricted by a conservation easement held by the New England Forestry Foundation. The easement includes language that supports public access on the property as well as "best management practices" for forest management. The lands included within the conservation easement are depicted on Map 2: Public Facilities and Transportation.

## WATER RESOURCES

### Watersheds

A watershed is the land area in which runoff from precipitation drains into a body of water. The boundaries of watersheds, also known as drainage divides, are shown for Cooper on Map 4: Water Resources. The portion of the watershed that has the greatest potential to affect a body of water is its direct watershed, or that part which does not first drain through upstream areas. Anything that can be transported by water will eventually reach and impact the quality of a water body. Development activities, such as house and road construction and timber harvesting, disturb the land that drains to a lake by streams and groundwater; thus these activities can pollute the watershed.

The town of Cooper shares the shoreline of Cathance Lake with the neighboring unorganized territory of Cathance Township. There are several small watersheds in Cooper depicted on Map 4, almost all of which drain toward the Dennys River. The exceptions are small portions of the upper watersheds of Seavey Brook and three small lakes in Township 19 which are part of the headwaters of the East Machias River. Vining Lake is another small headwater lake that drains into the East Machias watershed. As well, Fifteenth Stream traverses the northeast corner of Cooper and drains into Meddybemps Lake which is hydrologically connected to both the Dennys and the St Croix Rivers.

Howe Brook Mill Stream, flowing out of Mill Pond and the streams know as Big Inlet and Little Inlet all drain into Cathance Lake which ultimately reaches the Dennys River in Cathance Township. Dead Stream and Splinter Brook drain directly into the upper reaches of the Dennys River which forms the border between Cooper and the neighboring town of Charlotte.

Cathance Lake is managed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as a coldwater fishery that is stocked annually with landlocked salmon (*Salmo salar sebago*). Stocking of Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) and Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*) ceased in the 1970s and stocking of Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) ended in the 1940s.

There are no mapped aquifers with potential yields greater than 10 gallons per minute in the town of Cooper. However, certain local wells do yield between 10-50 gallons per minute. A mapped aquifer with potential yields of 10-50 gallons per minute is located in neighboring

Meddybemps under the large blueberry heath located on either side of Route 191. Except for blueberry fields scattered along the major roads through town, the majority of these watersheds are forested.

Threats to water quality come from point and non-point discharges. Point source pollution is discharged directly from a specific site such as a municipal sewage treatment plant or an industrial outfall pipe. There are no point source discharges within the town of Cooper.

Non-point source pollution poses the greatest threat to water quality in Maine communities and Cooper is no exception. The most significant contributing source comes from erosion and sedimentation as well as excessive run-off of nutrients, particularly phosphorus. In excessive quantities phosphorus acts as a fertilizer and causes algae to flourish or “bloom”. Additional contributing factors include animal wastes, fertilizers, sand and salt storage, faulty septic systems, roadside erosion, leaking underground storage tanks, and hazardous substances.

### **Rivers, Streams, and Brooks**

As defined by Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act, a river, stream, or brook is a channel that has defined banks (including a floodway and associated flood plain wetlands) created by the action of the surface water. Cooper's rivers, streams and brooks, illustrated on Map 4, include:

1. Fifteenth Stream (Dennys River watershed)
2. Big Inlet and Little Inlet (Dennys River watershed)
3. Splinter Brook (Dennys River watershed)
4. Mill Stream (Dennys River watershed)
5. Dead Stream (Dennys River watershed)
6. Vining Stream (East Machias River watershed)

To assess what portion of Maine's rivers, streams, and brooks meet the goal of the Clean Water Act; MDEP uses bacteriological, dissolved oxygen, and aquatic life criteria. All river waters are classified into one of four categories, Class AA, A, B, and C as defined by legislation. Class AA is the highest classification with outstanding quality and high levels of protection. Class C, on the other end of the spectrum, is suitable for recreation and fishing yet has higher levels of bacteria and lower levels of oxygen. The classifications for Cooper's waterways are shown on Map 4 – Water Resources and listed in the following table with definitions of all classifications in the footnotes:

Table D-2 COOPER WATER QUALITY CLASSIFICATIONS

Waterway	Waterway Segment	Classification <sup>1</sup>
Dennys River	Main Stem	Class AA.
Dennys River	Tributaries	Class A
East Machias River	Tributaries	Class A unless otherwise specified

## Shorelands and Floodplains

Shorelands are environmentally important areas because of their relationship to water quality, their value as wildlife habitat and travel, and their function as floodplains. Development and the removal of vegetation in shoreland areas can increase runoff and sedimentation leading to an

<sup>1</sup> 1. Class AA waters. Class AA shall be the highest classification and shall be applied to waters which are outstanding natural resources and which should be preserved because of their ecological, social, scenic or recreational importance.

A. Class AA waters shall be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of drinking water after disinfection, fishing, recreation in and on the water and navigation and as habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The habitat shall be characterized as free flowing and natural. [1985, c. 698, § 15 (new).]

B. The aquatic life, dissolved oxygen and bacteria content of Class AA waters shall be as naturally occurs. [1985, c. 698, § 15 (new).]

C. There may be no direct discharge of pollutants to Class AA waters, except storm water discharges that are in compliance with state and local requirements. [1999, c. 243, §8 (amd).]  
[1999, c. 243, §8 (amd).]

2. Class A waters. Class A shall be the 2nd highest classification.

A. Class A waters shall be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of drinking water after disinfection; fishing; recreation in and on the water; industrial process and cooling water supply; hydroelectric power generation, except as prohibited under Title 12, section 403; and navigation; and as habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The habitat shall be characterized as natural. [1985, c. 698, § 15 (new).]

B. The dissolved oxygen content of Class A waters shall be not less than 7 parts per million or 75% of saturation, whichever is higher. The aquatic life and bacteria content of Class A waters shall be as naturally occurs. [1985, c. 698, § 15 (new).]

C. Direct discharges to these waters licensed after January 1, 1986, are permitted only if, in addition to satisfying all the requirements of this article, the discharged effluent will be equal to or better than the existing water quality of the receiving waters. Prior to issuing a discharge license, the department shall require the applicant to objectively demonstrate to the department's satisfaction that the discharge is necessary and that there are no other reasonable alternatives available. Discharges into waters of this classification licensed prior to January 1, 1986, are allowed to continue only until practical alternatives exist. There may be no deposits of any material on the banks of these waters in any manner so that transfer of pollutants into the waters is likely. [1989, c. 890, Pt. A, §40 (aff); Pt. B, §62 (amd).]  
[1989, c. 890, Pt. A, §40 (aff); Pt. B, §62 (amd).]

3. Class B waters. Class B shall be the 3rd highest classification.

A. Class B waters shall be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of drinking water supply after treatment; fishing; recreation in and on the water; industrial process and cooling water supply; hydroelectric power generation, except as prohibited under Title 12, section 403; and navigation; and as habitat for fish and other aquatic life. The habitat shall be characterized as unimpaired. [1985, c. 698, § 15 (new).]

B. The dissolved oxygen content of Class B waters shall be not less than 7 parts per million or 75% of saturation, whichever is higher, except that for the period from October 1st to May 14th, in order to ensure spawning and egg incubation of indigenous fish species, the 7-day mean dissolved oxygen concentration shall not be less than 9.5 parts per million and the 1-day minimum dissolved oxygen concentration shall not be less than 8.0 parts per million in identified fish spawning areas. Between May 15th and September 30th, the number of *Escherichia coli* bacteria of human origin in these waters may not exceed a geometric mean of 64 per 100 milliliters or an instantaneous level of 427 per 100 milliliters. [1985, c. 698, § 15 (new).]

C. Discharges to Class B waters shall not cause adverse impact to aquatic life in that the receiving waters shall be of sufficient quality to support all aquatic species indigenous to the receiving water without detrimental changes in the resident biological community. [1985, c. 698, § 15 (new).]  
[1985, c. 698, § 15 (new).]

4. Class C waters. Class C shall be the 4th highest classification.

A. Class C waters shall be of such quality that they are suitable for the designated uses of drinking water supply after treatment; fishing; recreation in and on the water; industrial process and cooling water supply; hydroelectric power generation, except as prohibited under Title 12, section 403; and navigation; and as a habitat for fish and other aquatic life. [1985, c. 698, § 15 (new).]

increase in the amount of nutrients and other pollutants that reach surface water. This can lead to algal blooms and degraded water quality. Steep slopes with highly erodible soils are particularly susceptible to erosion. The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, with revisions adopted by Cooper in 2006 is designed to provide protection to shorelands.

Floodplains serve to accommodate high levels and large volumes of water and to dissipate the force of flow. A floodplain absorbs and stores a large amount of water, later becoming a source of aquifer recharge. Floodplains also serve as wildlife habitats, open space and outdoor recreation without interfering with their emergency overflow capacity. Flooding can cause serious destruction of property and activities that increase paved or impervious surfaces and/or that change the watercourse on floodplains increase the quantity and rate of runoff that can intensify flooding impacts downstream.

The Town of Cooper does not participate in the Flood Insurance Program and has no Floodplain Management Ordinance. The flood hazard areas inundated by 100-year flood are not available in paper or digital format for the town of Cooper and so are not mapped for this plan.

Intensive development in floodplains, flood prone areas, and "special flood hazard areas" should be avoided. In addition, existing development and incompatible land use activities should not be permitted to expand and should be amortized for their eventual elimination, to the maximum extent possible. For these reasons Cooper should seek funds to have its floodplains mapped.

Enrollment in the National Flood Insurance Program would help Cooper obtain the initial mapping of its floodplains and in so doing help to reduce the risk of property loss through proper permitting of all floodplain development and the availability of flood insurance. As a participating community every property owner and renter in Cooper would be eligible to purchase flood insurance, regardless of their location. The availability of flood insurance solves many of the real estate/lending issues that occur in non-participating communities, or which could occur if the community were suspended from the program. [Floodplain insurance is required as a condition of a loan for structures in a floodplain.] An additional benefit of participation in the NFIP is that the community is eligible to apply for funds (on a competitive basis) under the 404 Post Disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant program. Also, in the event of a Presidentially declared disaster, residents will have access to forms of disaster assistance which are not available in non-participating communities.

### **Wetlands**

The term "wetlands" is defined under both state and federal laws as "those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soils." Wetlands include freshwater swamps, bogs, marshes, heaths, swales, and meadows.

Wetlands are important to the public health, safety and welfare because they act as a filter, absorb excess water, serve as aquifer discharge areas, and provide critical habitats for a wide range of fish and wildlife. They are fragile natural resources. Even building on the edge of a wetland can have significant environmental consequences. Some wetlands have important

recreational and educational value providing opportunities for fishing, boating, hunting, and environmental education.

The Maine DEP has identified wetlands located within Cooper, as illustrated on Map 4: Water Resources. These wetlands were identified as wetlands by aerial photo interpretation. Interpretations were confirmed by soil mapping and other wetland inventories. Field verification of the location and boundaries of the wetlands should be undertaken prior to development. The Maine DEP has jurisdiction over freshwater wetlands and floodplain wetlands under the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA)/Wetland Protection Rules and Site Location of Development Act. Finally, the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Law provides protection to mapped non-forested wetlands. Cooper contains many open water wetlands associated with its rivers and streams and very large wetlands in the northwestern portion of town.

### **Lakes, Phosphorus and Development**

The quality of our lakes as recreational resources, gems of natural beauty and fisheries is a result, at least in part, of their phosphorus content. Phosphorus controls the level of algae<sup>2</sup> production in lakes. The abundance of algae in the lake water determines the clarity of the water as well as the amount of well-oxygenated cold water available to cold water fish species (trout and salmon) in the summer months. Low phosphorus concentrations yield clear lakes with plenty of deep, cold water oxygen. Higher phosphorus concentrations cause lakes to be cloudy and oxygen may be severely depleted or eliminated from the deep, cold water in the summer months. Very high concentrations cause dense blooms of blue-green algae, which turn the water a murky green and accumulate in smelly, decaying scums along the shoreline.

Phosphorus is a very common element typically associated with soil and organic matter. It gets into our lakes in a variety of ways. The rainfall that falls directly on the lake has some phosphorus dissolved in it and groundwater may contribute some phosphorus from septic systems around the shoreline. Most of the lake's phosphorus comes from stormwater runoff draining from the lake's watershed to the lake in tributary streams and drainage ways. The amount of phosphorus in the lake depends on what the stormwater runs over on its way to these streams and drainage ways. If the watershed, the land area draining to the lake, is forested, the phosphorus concentration in the lake will be low because the forest is an effective phosphorus sponge, and does not release its phosphorus readily to the stormwater. However, stormwater draining from developed land, whether residential, commercial or industrial, contains a lot of phosphorus. Since the portion of stormwater phosphorus that supports algae growth tends to be associated with small, lightweight soil particles, it is carried very easily and efficiently by stormwater and can be delivered to the lake from anywhere in the watershed. So, generally speaking, the more developed a lake's watershed is, the higher its phosphorus concentration.

For lakes with developed or developing watersheds, there are two requirements for keeping phosphorus low and water quality high. First, existing sources of phosphorus to the lake, particularly from soil erosion in the watershed and from inadequate shoreline septic systems on sandy or shallow soils, need to be minimized. The DEP has developed a manual, the Lake

---

<sup>2</sup> Algae are microscopic plants, which grow suspended in the open water of the lake or in concentrated clumps around the shallow margins of the lakeshore.

Watershed Survey Manual, to guide volunteers in identifying and characterizing watershed phosphorus sources with the assistance of professionals. DEP also has grant programs available to assist in funding these surveys and in fixing the problems identified by the surveys. Second, new additions of phosphorus to the lake that will result from residential and commercial growth in the watershed need to be minimized.

The Maine DEP and the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) have collaborated in the collection of lake data to evaluate present water quality, track algae blooms, and determine water quality trends. The Cathance Lake Association is a very active collaborator in water quality monitoring. This dataset does not include bacteria, mercury, or nutrients other than phosphorus. Table D-3 provides summaries of the water quality data for those lakes in Cooper where monitoring has occurred.

Table D-3 LAKE CHARACTERISTICS AND WATER QUALITY SUMMARIES

Waterbody	Acres	Mean Depth (ft.)/ Maximum Depth (ft.)	Watershed	Water Quality (WQ) Monitoring
Cathance Lake	3227	24/75	Dennys River	Collected since 1977 (8 years of data); basic chemical information and Secchi Disk Transparencies (SDT). Water Quality (WQ) considered above average and potential for nuisance algal blooms is low.
Vining Lake	25	14/40	East Machias River	Limited data available.

Source: PEARL Database, Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Environmental and Watershed Research, Maine DEP, and Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program, 2005.

Lake water quality is considered above average on Cathance Lake and potential for algal blooms is low under current conditions. There is no baseline data on Vining Lake from which to compare as development pressures increase.

**Evaluating New Development Proposals in Lake Watersheds** The DEP has developed a method, described in detail in the manual “Phosphorus Control in Lake Watersheds: A Technical Guide for Evaluating New Development”<sup>3</sup>, to evaluate whether or not a proposed development will add a disproportionate amount of new phosphorus to a lake. It provides a standard which limits the amount of phosphorus that a proposed new development can add to the lake and a means by which the development can be designed and evaluated to insure that it meets the standard for that lake. It principally addresses the long-term increase in stormwater phosphorus

<sup>3</sup> Phosphorus Control in Lake Watersheds: A Technical Guide for Evaluating New Development - Part A of Chapter 3 in the technical guide describes how the DEP determines phosphorus allocations using the other information included in the spreadsheet. Part B of Chapter 3 describes how to estimate the increase in phosphorus loading to the lake that will result from new subdivision and commercial/industrial type developments. This is the same method that is used to evaluate development applications in lake watersheds that are submitted to DEP under the Site Location Law and the Stormwater Management Law. It is also used by many towns to evaluate applications for new development under their Subdivision and Site Review ordinances. Typically, this analysis is performed by the developer’s consultant, either an engineer, surveyor or soil scientist, though in some it is performed by the developer. DEP can provide assistance to local planning boards in reviewing these submittals as well as to the developer or his/her consultant in performing the analysis.

that occurs when land is converted from forest or field to residential, commercial or industrial development. Though the standards in this manual will greatly reduce potential long-term impacts on lake water quality, the standards do not totally prevent contributions of phosphorus from new development. Also, since these standards will likely not be applied to all new phosphorus sources in the lake's watershed, their implementation may not, by itself, be sufficient to prevent a noticeable decline in lake water quality. In order to insure that lake water quality is maintained, new development standards should be applied in conjunction with efforts to reduce or eliminate some of the most significant existing sources of phosphorus in the watershed.

**Phosphorus Allocations** - Table D-4 provides phosphorous information for Cathance Lake. The last column of the table indicates an estimated per acre phosphorus allocation, in pounds of phosphorus per acre per year (lb/acre/yr), for Cathance Lake. This allocation serves as a standard for evaluating new development proposals. It is applied to the area of the parcel of land being developed to determine how much the development should be allowed to increase phosphorus loading to the lake. For instance, a development proposed on a 100 acre parcel in a lake watershed with a per acre allocation of 0.05 lb/acre/yr would be allowed to increase the annual phosphorus loading to the lake by 5 lb (0.05 X 100). If the projected increase in phosphorus loading to the lake from the development does not exceed this value, than it can safely be concluded that the development will not add an excessive amount of phosphorus to the lake.

Table D-4 PER ACRE PHOSPHOROUS ALLOCATIONS FOR COOPER LAKES

LAKE	Direct land drainage area in Township in acres DDA	Area not available for development in acres ANAD	Area available for development in acres (DDA - ANAD) AAD	Growth Factor GF	Area likely to be developed in acres (GF x AAD) D	lbs. phosphorus allocated to towns share of watershed per ppb in lake F	Water quality category WQC	Level of Protection (h=high (coldwater fishery); m=medium) LOP	Acceptable increase in lake's phosphorus concentration in ppb C	lbs. per acre phosphorus allocation (FC/D) P
Cathance Lake	7138	350	6788	0.2	1358	132.4	good	h	1	0.098
Vining Lake	n/a									

Source: Maine DEP, 2006

## Fishery Resources

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) has rated the lakes, ponds, and streams in Cooper as to their value as fisheries habitat. Each water body is rated according to whether it receives cold water or warm water fisheries management. Cold water management supports salmonid species such as salmon and trout, while warm water management supports black bass, chain pickerel, and perch. Some lakes have a combination of both coldwater and warmwater fisheries management.

Cathance Lake is managed as a coldwater fishery. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife currently stocks Cathance Lake with landlocked salmon. Vining Lake is managed as a warmwater fishery and is currently stocked with Brook Trout. Until and unless public access is affirmed on Vining Lake the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has indicated they will not continue to stock Vining Lake.

Cathance Lake and Vining Lake are open to fishing and boating. Freshwater fish that are found in Cathance Lake include searun alewife, American eel, banded killifish, brook trout, brown bullhead, fallfish, rainbow smelt, landlocked salmon, smallmouth bass, threespine stickleback, white sucker, and yellow perch. Freshwater fish found in Vining Lake include brook trout, ninespine stickleback, northern redbelly dace and rainbow smelt.

Land use activities that directly affect water quality can significantly alter or destroy the value of these areas for fish. Land clearing or development in the adjacent upland habitat, or “riparian zone”, can also degrade a fishery. Riparian habitat functions to protect water quality and fisheries values by filtering out excessive nutrients, sediments, or other pollutants leaching in from upland areas, by maintaining water temperatures suitable for aquatic life, and by contributing vegetation and invertebrates to the food base.

### **Groundwater - Sand and Gravel Aquifers**

Aquifers may be of two types: bedrock aquifers and sand and gravel aquifers. A bedrock aquifer is adequate for small yields. A sand and gravel aquifer is a deposit of coarse-grained surface materials that, in all probability, can supply large volumes of groundwater. Boundaries are based on the best-known information and encompass areas that tend to be the principal groundwater recharge sites. Recharge to these specific aquifers, however, is likely to occur over a more extensive area than the aquifer itself.

The Maine Geological Survey has identified no extensive sand and gravel aquifers within Cooper. As noted above there is a large aquifer in neighboring Meddybemps, as shown on Map 4 - Water Resources. According to the Maine Department of Human Services, Bureau of Health, Division of Health Engineering, Drinking Water Program there are no Public Water Supply Sources in Cooper.

Map 4 can be used to identify surface sites that are unfavorable for storage or disposal of wastes or toxic hazardous materials. It is important to protect groundwater from pollution and depletion. Once groundwater is contaminated, it is difficult, if not impossible, to clean. Contamination can eventually spread from groundwater to surface water and vice versa. Protecting a groundwater resource and preventing contamination are the most effective and least expensive techniques for preserving a clean water supply for current and future uses. Possible causes of aquifer and surface water contamination include agriculture, run-off of animal waste, faulty septic systems, road-salt storage and application, leaking above ground or underground storage tanks, agricultural run-off, auto salvage yards, and landfills. In addition to these major sources, things as diverse as golf courses, cemeteries, dry cleaners, burned buildings, and automobile service stations are potential threats to groundwater.

**MARINE RESOURCES**

Though inland, some Cooper residents rely on coastal resources for their livelihood.

Table D-5 COUNT OF RESIDENTS HOLDING MARINE FISHING LICENSES

Type	License Year		Grand Total
	2004	2007	
Harvesters	1	1	2

Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources, 2008

Table D-6 COUNT OF LICENSES HELD BY COOPER RESIDENTS

Count of License Types/Town	Harvesters by Year		Harvesters by Year Total
	2004	2007	
License Type			
Lobster/Crab, Student	1	1	2
Seaweed, supplemental	0	1	1

Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources, 2008

Table D-7 COUNT OF LOBSTER TRAPS FISHED BY COOPER RESIDENTS

Year	2004
Total Trap Tags	100

Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources, 2008

**CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES****Maine Natural Areas Program**

The Natural Areas Program is administered by the State Department of Conservation whose job it is to document Rare and Unique Botanical Features. These include the habitat of rare, threatened, or endangered plant species and unique or exemplary natural communities.

There is one such rarity in Cooper along its border with the town of Charlotte (formed by the Dennys River). This Rare and Exemplary Community is known as a Stream Shore Ecosystem, a group of communities bordering and directly influenced by the open-water portion of a stream (first order through third or fourth order). It includes vegetated aquatic communities as well as the emergent and bordering communities. Most communities are palustrine; streams are generally too small to exert many disturbance effects on adjacent terrestrial areas. Terrestrial forests bordering streams are included under forested upland ecosystems.

There are also three Rare and Exemplary plant communities in the Meddybemps Heath (see description below) in neighboring Meddybemps.

## Wildlife Habitats

Conserving an array of habitats and their associated wildlife species will help in maintaining biological diversity and ensuring that wildlife and human populations remain healthy. To feed and reproduce, wildlife relies on a variety of food, cover, water, and space. Development often has negative impact on these, resulting in the loss of habitats and diversity, habitat fragmentation and loss of open space, and the loss of travel corridor.

The richest wildlife diversity in Cooper is avian. There are several areas of waterfowl and wading bird habitat and three large deer wintering areas. See Map 7 - Critical Habitat.

Cooper also contains one Focus Area of Statewide significance. It is part of what is called the Meddybemps Heath, a 2,500 acre heath that is the second largest domed bog ecosystem in the Eastern Coastal and Eastern Interior regions. The Great Heath in Columbia is the largest. Meddybemps Heath lies at the southwest side of Meddybemps Lake where Sixteenth and Fifteenth Streams converge at the lakeshore. It is contained within the three towns of Alexander, Cooper and Meddybemps. It is a large peatland embedded with remnant geologic features including an elongate esker that separates much of the lake from the interior of the bog. Nearly half of this peatland is dwarf shrub bog and other community types include crowberry-lichen bog, sweetgale mixed shrub fen, peatland lagg, black spruce bog woodland, leatherleaf bog lawn, and mixed cedar woodland fen. Meddybemps Heath is entirely in private ownership and threats to its ecological integrity include invasive species (eg. purple loosestrife), peat mining, hydrologic alteration including draining and cranberry conversion.

**Essential Wildlife Habitats** - Essential Wildlife Habitats are defined under the Maine Endangered Species Act as a habitat "currently or historically providing physical or biological features essential to the conservation of an Endangered or Threatened Species in Maine and which may require special management considerations". According to MDIFW, Cooper has no sites of essential wildlife habitat.

**Significant Wildlife Habitat** - Significant Wildlife Habitat, as defined by Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA), is intended to prevent further degradation of certain natural resources of state significance. NRPA-defined Significant Wildlife Habitats in Cooper are illustrated on Map 7 - Critical Habitat and include several areas of inland waterfowl/wading bird habitat - used for breeding, migration/staging and wintering habitat for inland waterfowl or for breeding, feeding, loafing, migration, or roosting habitats for inland wading birds. There are also three deer wintering areas – forested areas used by deer to avoid deep snow/cold (non-forested wetlands, non-stocked clearcuts, and deciduous – or larch-dominated stands less than 10-acres in size may be include within the polygons as drawn on Map 7).

In addition to the habitats that have been mapped by IF&W and mentioned above, other notable wildlife habitats in Cooper include large, undeveloped habitat blocks and riparian habitats, and vernal ponds. Larger undeveloped blocks of forest and wetlands provide habitat for wide-ranging mammals such as bobcat and black bear, as well as for rarely-seen forest birds and a myriad of other wildlife species. Riparian areas offer habitat for many plants and animals and can also

serve as wildlife travel corridors, as well as playing an important role in protection of water quality, as noted in the plan. See also Appendix D for a local naturalist's list of wildlife sightings in Cooper for the period 2007 to 2010.

**Atlantic Salmon** - In December 1999, the State of Maine banned angling for Atlantic salmon statewide. In November 2000, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service officially declared as endangered the Atlantic salmon populations in eight Maine rivers (Dennys, East Machias, Machias, Pleasant, Narraguagus, Ducktrap and Sheepscot Rivers and Cove Brook). Accordingly, it is unlawful to angle, take or possess any Atlantic salmon from all Maine waters (including coastal waters), and it is a federal offense to take fish in the above-mentioned eight Maine rivers. Any salmon incidentally caught, must be released immediately, alive and uninjured.

Upper reaches of the Dennys River form part of the eastern boundary of the town of Cooper. The Atlantic Salmon Commission has protected the land adjoining the River where there are extensive wetlands within Cooper (see Maps 2, 4 and 7).

Control of non-point sources of pollutants, principally nutrients and sediments, through the use of local ordinances is one means by which Salmon habitat can be protected without removing additional parcels from the assessment rolls when they are purchased for conservation.

## **PUBLIC ACCESS POINTS**

Within the town, there is one beach operated for town taxpayers, residents and their guests providing fresh-water access to Cathance. It is depicted on Map 2, Cooper Public Facilities and Transportation. There are several additional traditional access points that traverse private land in the town of Cooper. There are three public boat launches providing access to Cathance Lake in Cathance Township, one fully ramped boat launch on Route 191 and two carry-in access points at the south end of the Lake. A complete discussion of these accesses is provided in Chapter G – Recreation, Scenic Resources and Open Space. Several questions in the Public Survey (see Chapter K – Town Survey) were dedicated to issues surrounding the lakes in Cooper.

Investments in improvements on Cathance Lake were mixed. Expansion of public dock facilities are not generally supported. Additional public access is supported by some with somewhat lesser amounts of support for expanded swimming facilities on Cathance Lake.

Opinions on expanding the facilities at Cathance Lake were very polarized. The strongest support exists for expanded picnic and garbage facilities. Creation of a fund for purchase of additional land for public access was highly polarized.

## **STATE PARKS AND PUBLIC RESERVED LANDS**

There are no state parks or public reserve lands in Cooper. As noted there is one large parcel (362 acres) owned by the Atlantic Salmon Commission adjoining the Dennys River in the southeastern portion of the town.

As noted above, 2,250 acres of industrial forestland in the northeast corner of the town is restricted by a conservation easement held by the New England Forestry Foundation. The easement includes language that supports public access on the property as well as "best management practices" for forest management.

There are another 578 acres enrolled in the open space program in 2 parcels; one owned by the Quoddy Regional Land Trust (103 acres) along the Dennys River and another owned by the Bailey Wildlife Foundation (476 acres) on Hoggs Neck in Cathance Lake.

## **NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION**

There is a variety of laws and legal incentives that protect the natural resources in Cooper. Those of greatest significance are summarized below.

### **Pertinent Federal and State Laws:**

- Maine Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) – which regulates activities in, on, over or adjacent to natural resources such as lakes, wetlands, streams, rivers, fragile mountain areas, and sand dune systems. Standards focus on the possible impacts to the resources and to existing uses.
- Maine Storm Water Management – regulates activities creating impervious or disturbed areas (of size and location) because of their potential impacts to water quality. In effect, this law extends storm water standards to smaller-than Site Law-sized projects. It requires quantity standards for storm water to be met in some areas, and both quantity and quality standards to be met in others.
- Maine Site Location of Development Law – regulates developments that may have a substantial impact on the environment (i.e., large subdivisions and/or structures, 20 acre-plus developments, and metallic mineral mining operations. Standards address a range of environmental impacts.
- Maine Minimum Lot Size Law – regulates subsurface waste disposal through requirements for minimum lot size and minimum frontage on a water body. The minimum lot size requirement for a single-family residence is 20,000 square feet; the shoreland frontage requirement is 100 feet. The requirements for multi-family and other uses are based on the amount of sewage generated.
- Maine Endangered Species Act – regulates the designation and protection of endangered species including disallowing municipal action from superceding protection under the Act.
- The Forest Practices Act - regulates the practice of clear cutting by setting regeneration and clear cut size requirements.

**Pertinent Local Laws** - At the local level, Cooper has adopted minimum shoreland standards, as required by the State Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act. Surface waters in Cooper are also protected through the Plumbing Code and state mandated Subdivision Regulations. Cooper last revised its shoreland zoning ordinance in 2006. Cooper has also adopted a minimum lot size law (1 acre). This Comprehensive Plan recommends the adoption of a Zoning Ordinance to provide further protection to the water resources.

**Pertinent Tax Incentive Programs:** A variety of programs provide financial incentives for landowners to keep land undeveloped and managed for long term productivity. They include the following:

- Farm and Open Space Tax Law - (Title 36, MRSA, Section 1101, et seq.) encourages landowners to conserve farmland and open space by taxing the land at a rate based on its current use, rather than potential fair market value.

Eligible parcels in the farmland program must be at least five contiguous acres, utilized for the production of farming, agriculture or horticulture activities and show gross earnings from agricultural production of at least \$2,000 (which may include the value of commodities produced for consumption by the farm household) during one of the last two years or three of the last five years.

The Open Space portion of this program has no minimum lot size requirements and the tract must be preserved or restricted in use to provide a public benefit by conserving scenic resources, enhancing public recreation opportunities, promoting game management or preserving wildlife habitat. In 2009, Cooper had 2 parcels totaling 578.88 acres enrolled in farmland and open space tax status.

- Tree Growth Tax Law - (Title 36, MRSA, Section 571, et seq.) provides for the valuation of land classified as forestland on the basis of productivity, rather than fair market, value.

According to municipal records for fiscal year 2009, Cooper had 33 parcels totaling 9140 acres in tree growth tax status.

These programs enable farmers and other landowners to use their property for its productive use at a property tax rate that reflects farming and open space rather than residential development land valuations. If the property is removed from the program, a penalty is assessed against the property based on the number of years the property was enrolled in the program and/or a percentage of fair market value upon the date of withdrawal.

## **SUMMARY**

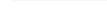
Cooper currently offers protection to its natural resources with locally adopted shoreland zoning regulations. These ordinance provisions will be updated to be consistent with the requirements of State and Federal Regulations and reviewed for improvement to specifically protect the lakes in Cooper. The town will continue to cooperate with the many local and regional organizations

working to protect the natural resources within and surrounding Cooper including the Dennys and East Machias River Watershed Councils, the Downeast Lakes Land Trust and neighboring communities. Regional efforts will focus on watershed protection, and land conservation.

# Cooper Comprehensive Plan Washington County, Maine

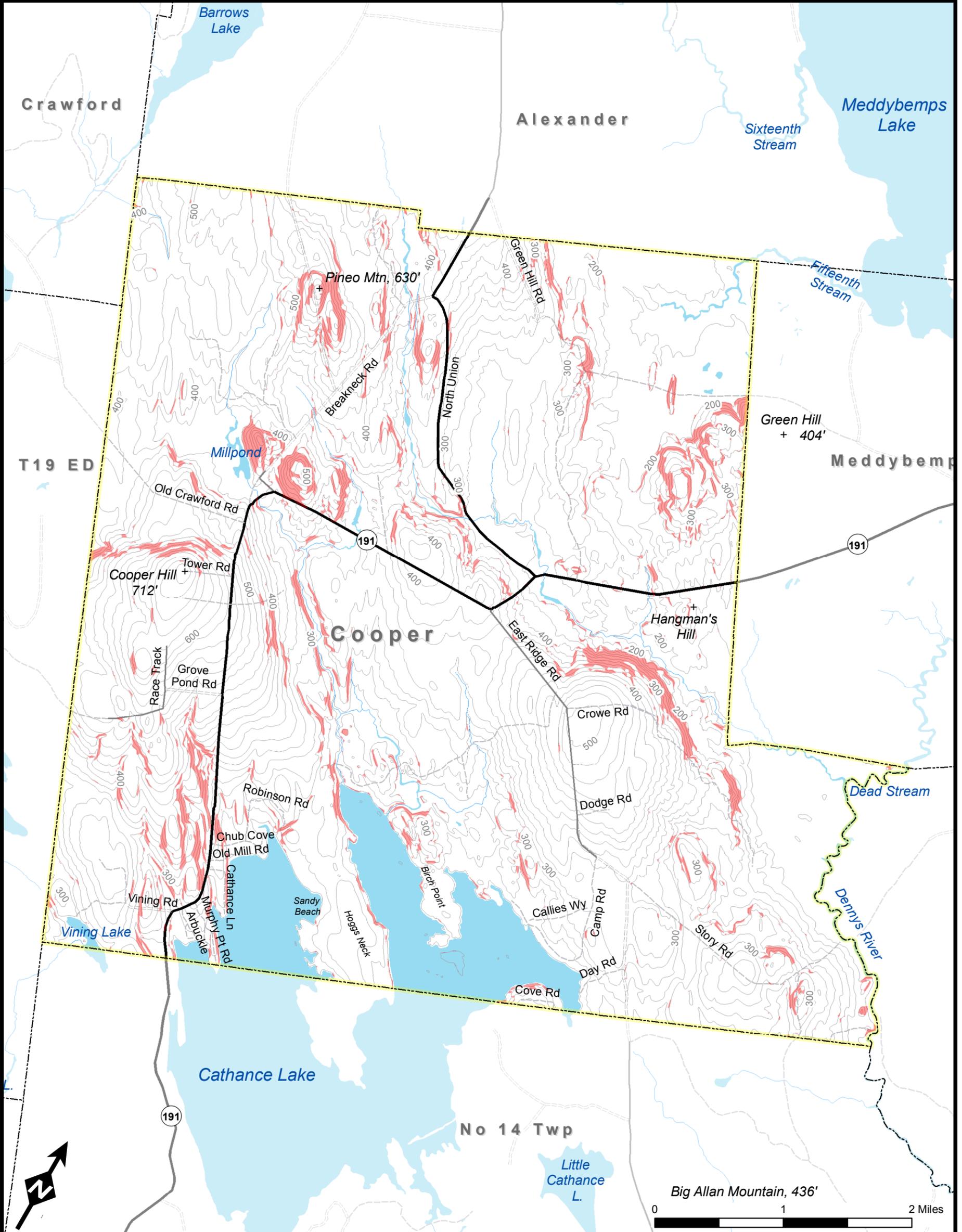
# MAP 3: Topography & Steep Slope

Data Sources:  
Maine Office of GIS, & UMM GIS  
Garmin GPS Receiver  
Universal Transverse  
Mercator- Zone 19N  
North American Datum- 1983

-  State Road
-  Town Road\*
-  Town Road (Unpaved)\*
-  Private Unpaved Road\*
-  Perennial Stream

-  20' Contour Lines
-  Areas of >15% Slope

\* Refer to pg G-9 regarding town & private roads.



# Cooper Comprehensive Plan Washington County, Maine

# MAP 4: Water Resources

Data Sources:  
Maine Office of GIS  
Garmin GPS Receiver  
Universal Transverse  
Mercator- Zone 19N  
North American Datum- 1983

- State Road
- Town Road\*
- Town Road (Unpaved)\*
- Private Unpaved Road\*
- Perennial Stream
- \* Refer to pg G-9 regarding town & private roads.

- ◆ Public Wells
- Boat Launch
- 🌿 Watershed Divides

### Water Quality Classification for Rivers & Streams

- AA
- A

### Significant Aquifers

- ▨ 10 - 50 gpm
- ▨ + 50 gpm

### NWI Wetlands

- 🌿 Forested Wetlands
- 🌿 Other Wetlands



# Cooper Comprehensive Plan Washington County, Maine

# MAP 5: Soil Suitability

Data Sources:  
Maine Office of GIS  
Garmin GPS Receiver  
Universal Transverse  
Mercator- Zone 19N  
North American Datum- 1983

- State Road
- Town Road\*
- Town Road (Unpaved)\*
- Private Unpaved Road\*
- Perennial Stream

\* Refer to pg G-9 regarding town & private roads.

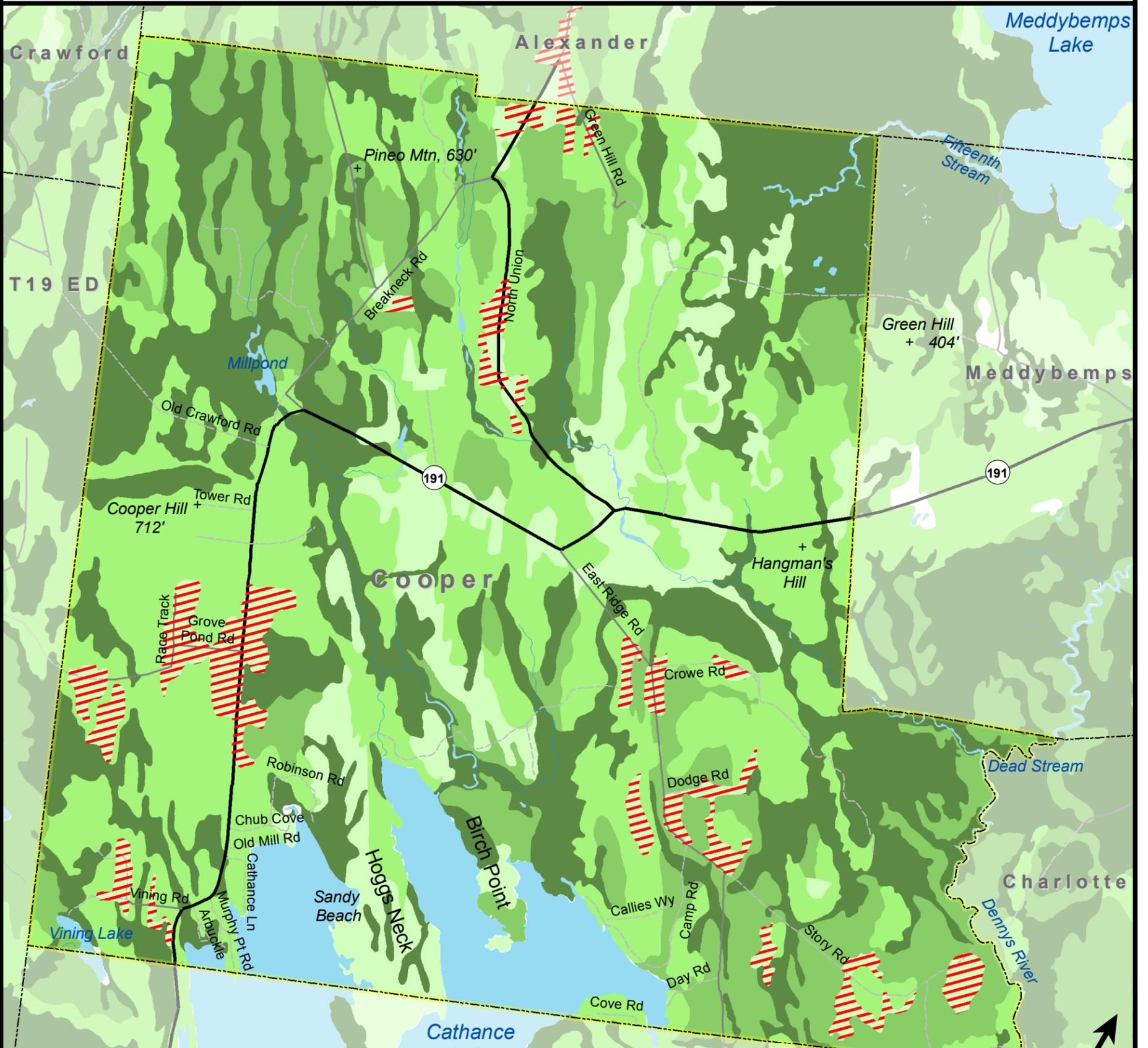
## Soil Suitability for Low Density Development

- Very High
- High
- Medium
- Low
- Very Low

Soils Suitability for Low Density Development is a weighted composite index developed by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. Soils that rate highly are considered "best" because they present fewest constraints to development and are therefore the least expensive soils on which to construct a home, septic system, and a road. Soils that rate low present multiple constraints to development. The composite rating for development was determined by a weighted average of individual soil potential indices as follows: septic tank absorption fields, 45%; dwellings with basements, 20%; and local streets and roads, 35%.

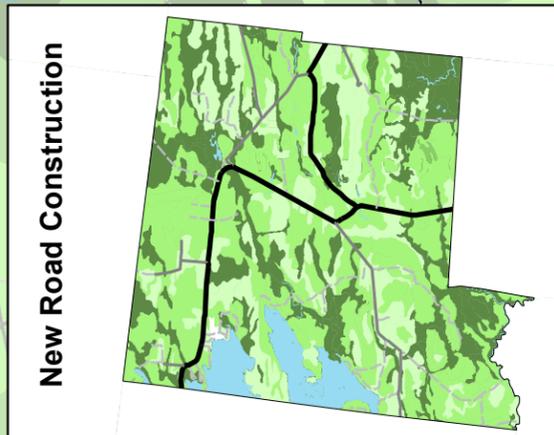
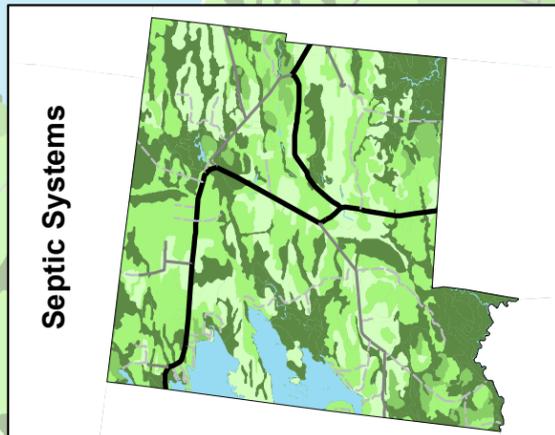
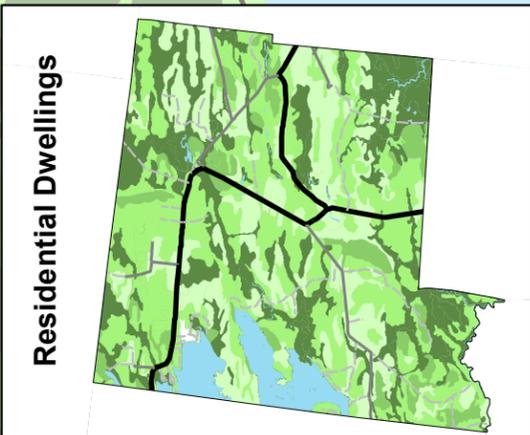
## Prime farmland

The US Dept. of Agriculture defines prime farmlands as the land best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. Prime farmland produces the highest yields and requires minimal amounts of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment (NRCS).



### Soil Suitability Indices

NRCS indices of soil suitability for development predict suitability for development based on soil characteristics that influence cost of construction. Highly rated soils that present the fewest constraints to development appear in light colors on the maps below; darker areas are less suitable to development.



# Cooper Comprehensive Plan

## Washington County, Maine

# MAP 6: Land Cover

Data Sources:  
 Maine Office of GIS  
 Garmin GPS Receiver  
 Universal Transverse  
 Mercator- Zone 19N  
 North American Datum- 1983

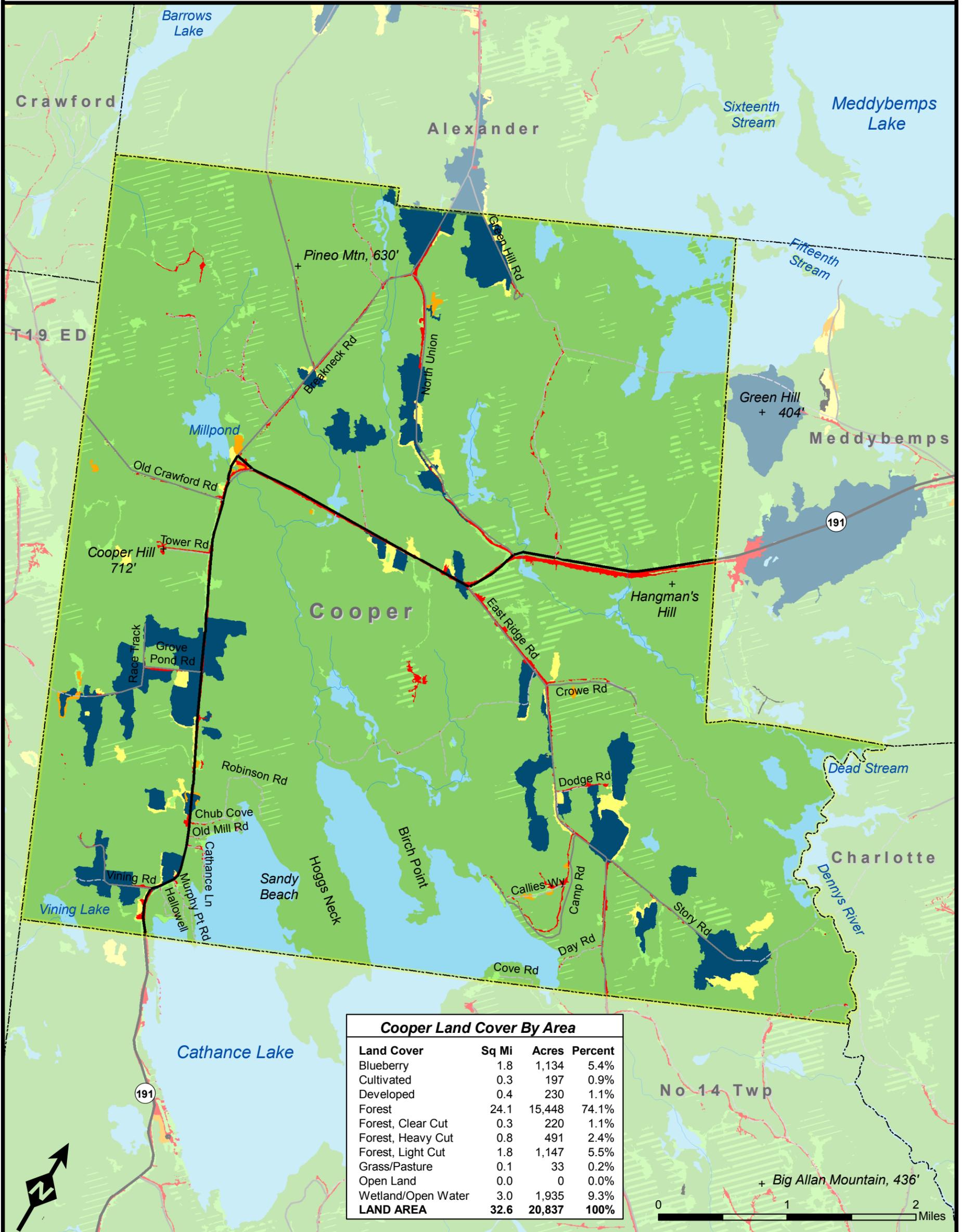
- State Road
- Town Road
- Path/Unpaved Way
- Perennial Stream

- ### Land Cover Type
- Blueberry
  - Cultivated
  - Developed
  - Forest
  - Forest, Clear Cut
  - Forest, Heavy Cut
  - Forest, Light Cut
  - Grass/Pasture
  - Open Land
  - Wetland/Open Water

- Forest, Heavy Cut
- Forest, Light Cut
- Grass/Pasture
- Open Land
- Wetland/Open Water

See page J-2 for qualifications to land cover type.  
 See other maps for roads classifications.

Land cover data based on interpretation of  
 1997 aerial photography.



Land Cover	Sq Mi	Acres	Percent
Blueberry	1.8	1,134	5.4%
Cultivated	0.3	197	0.9%
Developed	0.4	230	1.1%
Forest	24.1	15,448	74.1%
Forest, Clear Cut	0.3	220	1.1%
Forest, Heavy Cut	0.8	491	2.4%
Forest, Light Cut	1.8	1,147	5.5%
Grass/Pasture	0.1	33	0.2%
Open Land	0.0	0	0.0%
Wetland/Open Water	3.0	1,935	9.3%
<b>LAND AREA</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>20,837</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Cooper Comprehensive Plan Washington County, Maine

# MAP 7: Critical Habitat

Data Sources:  
Maine Office of GIS  
Garmin GPS Receiver  
Universal Transverse  
Mercator- Zone 19N  
North American Datum- 1983

-  Conserved Land
-  MNAP Focus Areas

## SIGNIFICANT HABITAT

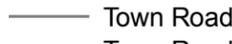
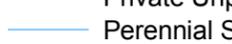
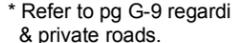
-  Inland Wading Bird & Waterfowl

## OTHER HABITAT

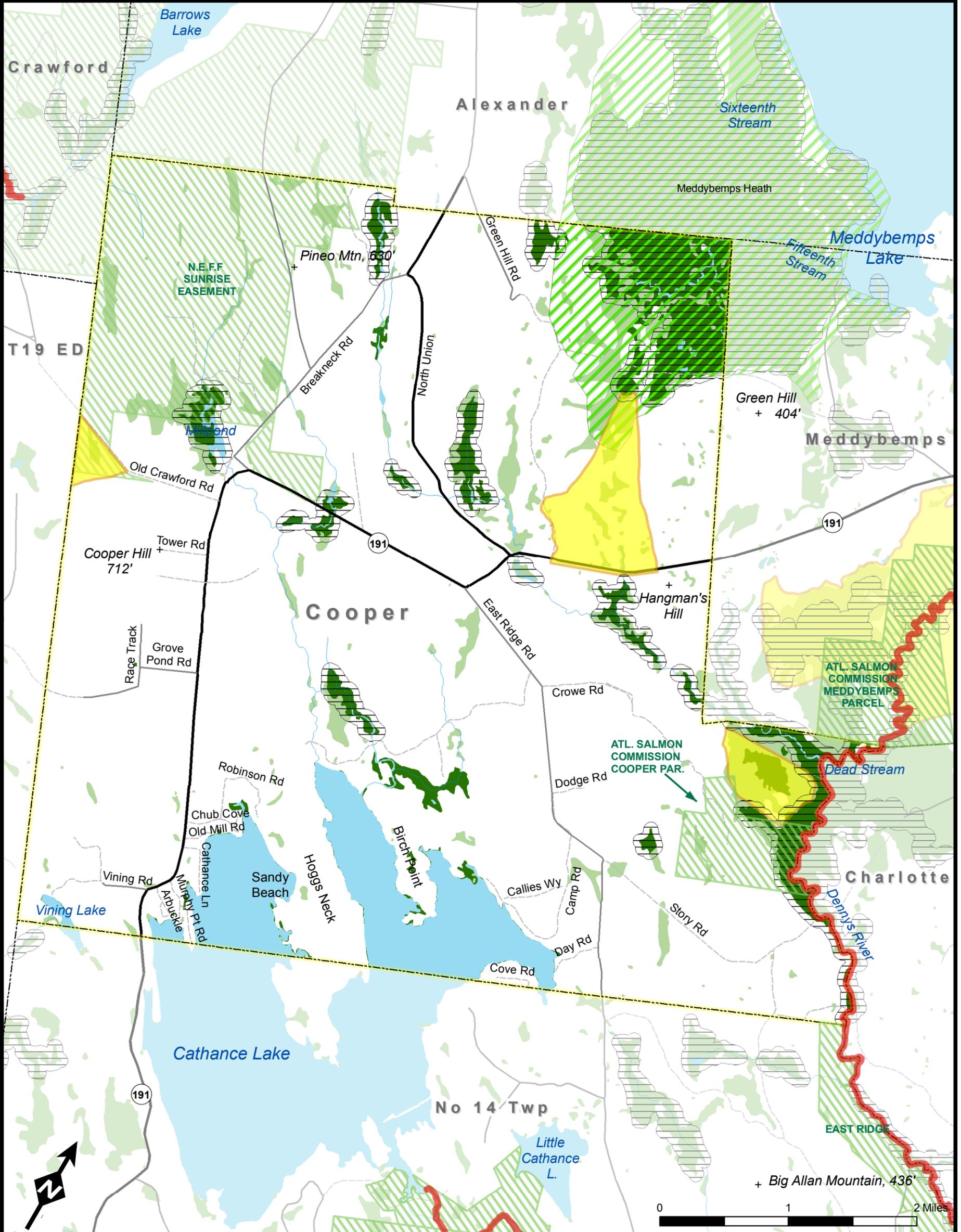
-  Atlantic Salmon
-  Deer Winter Area

## WETLANDS

-  Nonforested Wetlands
-  Significant Wetlands in Cooper

-  State Road
-  Town Road\*
-  Town Road (Unpaved)\*
-  Private Unpaved Road\*
-  Perennial Stream

\* Refer to pg G-9 regarding town & private roads.



## E. EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY

Cooper has traditionally relied on the land for its livelihood. Land for farming and timber for harvesting drew people here. Our rocky soil and cool climate, plus the promise of better land elsewhere caused some to leave. Out-migration was prompted by the California gold rush, Civil War, depletion of the marketable white pine, the development of the mills in Woodland, and by the lure of a better life off the farm. Cooper's population dropped steadily after a high of 657 in 1840 until in 1970 we had but 88 residents. Because of recent development of the second home market and those who can commute to surrounding towns for employment the population has rebounded to 145 year residents and another 300 seasonal residents in the summer months.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan examines several economic indicators, such as employment, labor force, income, and sales to assess the economic health of the community. The goal of the section is to develop policies which promote an economic climate in Cooper that improves job opportunities for local residents and encourages overall economic well-being.

### Cooper Business and Employment Today

Blueberry production is the most significant economic activity in Cooper and forestry remains a viable economic activity especially as wood fiber is used for more fuel uses, eg. pellets, hog fuel. The Domtar mill in Woodland is a significant employer of town residents. Other significant employers include the Department of Homeland Security, educational institutions, and nearby hospitals and social service agencies. In recent decades camp development along the shores of the lakes is spurring growth and demand for recreational use of the land and lakeshores.

### EMPLOYERS

The State of Maine Department of Labor reports that there are two local employers in the town of Cooper. However neither of the two employers reported by the Department of Labor are in fact located in Cooper. The Cooper Comprehensive Plan committee has indicated several local employers in addition to the inaccurate data provided by the Department of Labor. Cooper is a small community so the list of employers may under-represent actual employment. Many residents in Cooper are self-employed and operate home-based businesses particularly in blueberry-, and construction-based businesses. With the increasing value of timber some landowners are also conducting timber harvests. Seasonal employment is higher in the summer months associated with the blueberry harvest.

Table E-1 LOCAL EMPLOYERS

Employers in Cooper	Industry/Type of Business	Location	Approx # or range of Employees
Viselli Masonry	Masonry Contractor	Cooper Hwy	1-4
Cathance Lake Services	Construction	Cooper Hwy	1-4
Cherryfield Properties	Farm	Grove Pond Rd.	1-4 >10 seasonally

<b>Employers in Cooper</b>	<b>Industry/Type of Business</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Approx # or range of Employees</b>
Cousins Construction	General Contractor	Camp Rd.	1-4
Community Caring Collaborative	Social Services	Camp Rd.	1-4
Justin Day	Blueberry Farming	Cooper Hwy	1-4 >10 seasonally
Tim Ketchen	Contractor	Cooper Hwy	1-4
Chris McCormick	Carpentry, plowing	Vining	1-4

Source: Maine Department of Labor, 2009, Cooper Comprehensive Plan Committee, 2009

### **Recent Economic Trends**

Cooper is increasingly serving as a bedroom community for neighboring employment centers of Baileyville, Calais and Machias. Properties formerly used seasonally are being converted to year round residences and new year-round construction is occurring as well. This trend supports employment in construction, well drilling, site work, landscaping, caretaking and other services.

There are more visitors and seasonal residents in Cooper and they are staying longer than in the past. For much of the economic base, seasonal fluctuations of employment are significant for businesses in blueberry harvesting and wreath brush production. Self-employed individuals often have several jobs over several seasons and are not the same as those employed in traditional wage employment.

Recent closures of the Louisiana Pacific plant and staff cutbacks at the Domtar mill, both in Woodland, affected many Cooper residents. Some are retraining and doing other related work; very few have left the area.

### **Regional Economy**

Cooper is tied into the regional economy of Washington and Hancock counties. Because of it's reliance on service center communities like Calais, Machias and, to some extent, Bangor for the majority of goods and services it residents use, fluctuations in the region's economy directly affect the economy of Cooper.

Cooper is part of the Calais Labor Market Area<sup>1</sup>. According to the Eastern Maine Economic Strategy, prepared by the Eastern Maine Development Corporation in 2002, the Calais Labor Market Area (LMA) lost population in the last 20 years (-9.7% 1980-2000; -7.3% 1990-2000). This decline was greatest among two age groups - the school aged, and those aged 25-44 - who could contribute to the regional economy now and in the future. This out migration is reflected in drastically declining school enrollment figures in Washington County (-26.2%) as well as an increase in the dependency ratio within households. The dependency ratio is a figure that essentially adds the elder and youth population together and then divides that sum by those of

---

1 Note that the Calais Labor Market Area (LMA) boundaries were adjusted in 2005 as a result of Census information about commuting patterns. The information summarized here refers to the form LMA boundaries.

working age. It is a rough measure of a community's ability to generate income to support its needs. The ultimate impact of this decline in a working age population is a poverty rate in the Calais LMA of 16.9% in 2001 representing an increase of 1.5% since 1990.

Economic sectors in the Calais LMA that saw the largest growth in employment from 1998-2000 were Eating and Drinking Places, Educational Services and Food Stores. All three saw employment growth of greater than 10%, however average weekly wages were low (less than \$378/week). There are three sectors with high wages (greater than \$492/week) including Lumber and Wood Products, Paper and Allied Products and Trucking and Warehousing; however all three experienced stable or declining growth in employment. Likewise the Health Services sector has moderate wages (between \$379 and \$491/week) but experienced stable or declining growth in employment. Two other sectors, Automotive Dealers and Service Stations and General Merchandise Stores have low wages and are also experiencing stable or declining growth in employment.

Some of the major Washington County regional employers are shown in Table E-2.

Table E-2 REGIONAL EMPLOYERS

<b>Business</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Approx. # of Employees (or range of employees)</b>
Domtar (formerly Georgia Pacific)	Paper Mill	Baileyville	~300
Calais Regional Hospital	General Medical and Surgical Hospital	Calais	203
Atlantic Rehab and Nursing Cent	General Medical	Calais	75
Calais School Dept.	Public School	Calais	136
Thomas Di Cenzo, Inc.	General Contractors	Calais	100-249
Eastern Maine Electric Co-op	Electric Services	Calais	100-249
Calais Children's Project	Groups Homes and Counseling	Calais	100-249
Calais IGA	Grocery Store	Calais	50-99
Washington County Community College	College	Calais	50-99
Wal-Mart	Dept. Store	Calais	181
Shop 'N Save	Grocery Store	Calais	100-249
Mardens	Dept. Store	Calais	50-100
Department of Homeland Security	Border Patrol, Immigration, Customs, Security	Calais	50-100
Downeast Federal Credit Union	Banking	Calais, Machias	20-49
Machias Savings Bank	Banking	Calais, Machias	20-49
Bangor Savings Bank	Banking	Calais, Machias	20-49
The First	Banking	Calais	20-49
Eastport Port Authority, Federal Marine Terminals, Northeastern Longshoreman's Association	Marine Port	Eastport	85
City of Eastport	Municipal / School Department	Eastport	84
Creative Apparel	Clothing Manufacture	Eastport	77
Heritage Salmon	Aquaculture	Eastport	70

<b>Business</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Approx. # of Employees (or range of employees)</b>
USCG Search & Rescue	National Security	Eastport	24
Tex Shield	Clothing Manufacture	Eastport	20
Eastport Nursing Home	Skilled Nursing Facility	Eastport	20
Eastport Healthcare, Inc	Medical Facility	Eastport	20
Marine Technology Center	Jr College & Technical Institute	Eastport	13
Cooke Aquaculture USA	Sea Farming	Eastport	50-75
R&M IGA Foodliner	Grocery Store	Eastport	10
Down East Community Hospital	General Medical and Surgical Hospital	Machias	249
Machias School Dept.	Public School	Machias	137
Regional Medical Center in Lubec	General Medical and Surgical Hospital	Lubec	50-99
School Union 107	Public Schools	Baileyville	100-249
Maine Wild Blueberry Co	Food Processing	Machias	100-249
Marshall's Health Care Facility	Skilled Nursing Care	Machias	250-999
Shop 'N Save	Grocery Store	Machias	100-249
University of Maine at Machias	University	Machias	163

Source: Maine Dept. of Labor (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2000), and Maine 2001 Manufacturing Guide; input from Cooper Comprehensive Plan Committee and local research, 2009

Many Cooper residents commute to jobs located in surrounding communities. With a mean travel time to work of 39.2 minutes Cooper residents are traveling further than Washington County average (19.2 minutes) and their commuting times have increased in the past decade (mean commuting time to work in 1990 was 28.6 minutes). Comprehensive Plan Committee members indicate that this reflects a couple of changes since 1990. With improvements to Route 9 since 1990, some residents are commuting to Bangor. Others are commuting to the Downeast Community Hospital in Machias and others are now working in Baileyville who formerly worked in Cooper, Eastport or other Washington County towns.

Table E-1 WORKPLACE OF COOPER RESIDENTS IN 1990 AND 2000

<b>Workplace</b>	<b>Count of Residents 1990</b>	<b>Count of Residents 2000</b>
Baileyville	3	14
Calais	12	10
Eastport	3	0
Machias	0	12
Cooper	8	3
Other Washington County Towns	12	8
Other locations	13	13

US Census 1990 and 2000

According to the 2000 Census, Cooper's workforce overwhelmingly commutes by private vehicle. The second largest segment of the workforce commutes by carpools, the third largest walks to work or works at home.

Table E-3 COMMUTING TO WORK: 2000

COMMUTING TO WORK: 2000	Cooper		Washington County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Workers 16 years and over</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13,743</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Drove alone	55	87.0	10,444	76.0
In carpools	3	7.9	1,657	12.1
Using public transportation	2	0.0	64	0.5
Using other means	0	1.9	162	1.2
Walked	0	0.9	722	5.3
Worked at home	0	2.3	694	5.0
Mean Travel time to work (minutes)	39.2	--	19.2	--

Source: US Census

## LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

The labor force is defined as all persons who are either employed or are receiving unemployment compensation. Table E-4 shows the distribution of those aged 16 and above who are in or out of the workforce for Cooper and Washington County. Cooper has a slightly higher percentage of residents who are not in the workforce than does the county. Table 4 also shows that in 2000, almost 8% of the town's residents were unemployed, while countywide 8.5% were unemployed.

In September of 2009, the unemployment rate in Cooper had increased to 8.8% and in Washington County to 10.4%. In the Calais Labor Market, of which Cooper is a part, the September 2009 unemployment rate was 13%.

Table E-4 LABOR FORCE STATUS: 2000

Labor Force Status: 2000	Cooper		Washington County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Persons 16 years and over</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>27,214</b>	<b>100.0</b>
In labor force	65	56.0	15,500	57.0
Civilian labor force	65	56.0	15,354	56.4
Employed	60	51.7	14,042	51.6
Unemployed (% of Civilian Labor Force)	5	7.7	1,312	8.5
Armed Forces	0	0.0	146	0.5
Not in labor force	51	44.0	11,714	43.0

Source: US Census

The employed population for Cooper and Washington County is described in Table 5 by industry. The top three sectors of employment according to the US Census for Cooper are 'Education, health and social services'; 'Construction; and 'Manufacturing'. The top three sectors in Washington County in order of economic importance are 'Education, health and social services', 'Manufacturing', followed by 'Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, mining'.

Manufacturing jobs have historically provided a base for Washington County residents. But the entire manufacturing sector has declined steadily over the past three decades throughout the nation, the region, and the town.

Table E-5 EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS: 2000

Employment Characteristics: 2000	Cooper		Washington County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>INDUSTRY</b>				
<b>Employed persons 16 years and over</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14,042</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, mining	2	3.3	1,531	10.9
Construction	14	23.3	944	6.7
Manufacturing	8	13.3	1,968	14.0
Wholesale trade	0	0.0	384	2.7
Retail trade	5	8.3	1,521	10.8
Transportation, warehousing, utilities info	6	10.0	581	4.1
Information	0	0.0	146	1.0
Finance, insurance, and real estate	2	3.3	433	3.1
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	0	0.0	438	3.1
Education, health and social services	17	28.3	3,694	26.3
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	0	0.0	779	5.5
Other services (except public administration)	0	0.0	642	4.6
Public administration	6	10.0	981	7.0
<b>CLASS OF WORKER</b>				
Private wage and salary workers	43	71.7	9,225	65.7
Government workers	15	25.0	2,882	20.5
Self-employed workers	2	3.3	1,886	13.4
Unpaid family workers	0	0.0	49	0.3

Source: US Census

There are many Cooper residents with wage-based employment who earn additional income through seasonal self-employment. The number of self-employed workers in the Census likely undercounts those in this category. In addition there are also likely more residents who earn income from agriculture and forestry than the 2 counted in the 2000 census.

The lack of public transportation in rural areas inhibits employment for many residents living at or near the poverty level. Residents of larger service centers can more readily walk or carpool to work. Without a car, most residents of Cooper would not be able to get to work, and when unemployed or underemployed in a minimum wage job, some cannot maintain a vehicle particularly for severe winter conditions.

The lack of reliable high speed Internet access also inhibits development of other sources of income. Those who do have high speed access use the service to tele-commute to their employment in Bangor and out of state in the areas of publishing, legal research and writing, and other professional work.

## INCOME

Cooper's median household income increased considerably (52.3%) between 1989 and 1999 surpassing the median household income of the county but not the state. The relative difference has continued until 2002 according to data from the Maine State Housing Authority. The median household income projection for 2015 is for more modest increases than between 1989 and 1999.

Table E-6 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	U.S. Census			2008	Forecast <sup>2</sup>
	1979	1989	1999		2015 Projection
Cooper	\$15,972	\$21,750	\$33,125	n/a	\$58,878
Calais LMA	-	-	-	\$31,482	-
Washington County	\$10,443	\$19,967	\$25,869	\$31,395	\$36,984
Maine	\$13,816	\$27,896	\$37,240	\$46,321	\$61,534

Source: U.S. Census, Maine State Housing Authority, 2009

Table E-7 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME CHANGE

	1979-1989	1989-1999
Cooper	36.17%	52.3%
Washington County	91.20%	29.6%
Maine	101.91%	33.5%

Source: U.S. Census

While the median household income for Cooper is higher than that for Washington County, the per capita income in Cooper is only slightly higher than in Washington County.

Table E-8 INCOME IN 1999: 2000 CENSUS

	Cooper		Washington County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Households</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14,119</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Less than \$10,000	11	19.0	2,515	17.8
\$10,000 to \$14,999	6	10.3	1,745	12.4
\$15,000 to \$24,999	4	6.9	2,579	18.3
\$25,000 to \$34,999	11	19.0	2,156	15.3
\$35,000 to \$49,999	10	17.2	1,833	13.0
\$50,000 to \$74,999	14	24.1	668	4.7
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2	3.4	318	2.3
\$100,000 to \$149,999	0	0.0	74	0.5
\$150,000 or more	0	0.0	120	0.8
Median household income (dollars)	33,125	-	25,869	-
Per capita income (dollars)	14,353	-	14,119	-

Source: U.S. Census

Sources of income for residents of Cooper come primarily from wages and salaries with a greater contribution of retirement income compared to Washington County as a whole. Wage and salary

2 \*2015 Estimates are based on a twenty-year period (1980-2000 or 1979-1999) using linear regression analysis. These estimates are not based on percent growth per year (% GPY). Longer trend analysis should be conducted for comparison and to provide a range of possible projections that might better account for unique local circumstances.

income includes total earnings received for work performed, i.e. wages, salary, commissions, tips, piece-rate payments, and cash bonuses earned before tax deductions were made. Wage and salary employment is a broad measure of economic well-being but does not indicate whether the jobs are of good quality. In the 2000 Census, 3.3% of Cooper residents report self-employment income compared to 13.4% in the county as a whole (see Table 5). However, as indicated above self-employment in Cooper is likely higher than what is reported in the Census.

Fewer residents in Cooper collect social security income (17.2%) than do residents of the county (34%). Social Security income includes Social Security pensions, survivor's benefits and permanent disability insurance payments made by the Social Security Administration, prior to deductions for medical insurance and railroad retirement insurance from the U.S. Government. There are proportionately more Cooper residents receiving public assistance than in the County. Public assistance income includes payments made by Federal or State welfare agencies to low-income persons who are 65 years or older, blind, or disabled; receive aid to families with dependent children; or general assistance. In sum, the income types for Cooper show a lower percentage of wage and salary income and a higher percentage of residents on public assistance than is seen for the county as a whole. Percentages are somewhat deceiving however given that Cooper has a very small population and the absolute numbers are also very small.

Table E-9 INCOME TYPE IN 1999

Income Type in 1999 (Households often have more than one source of income, as seen here)	Cooper		Washington County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Households</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>14,119</b>	<b>100</b>
With wage and salary income	41	70.7%	10,162	72.0
With Social Security Income	10	17.2%	4,795	34.0
With Supplemental Security income	4	6.9%	949	6.7
With public assistance income	4	6.9%	910	6.4
With retirement income	13	22.4%	2,382	16.9

Source: U.S. Census

In 2000, the average poverty threshold for a family of four persons was \$17,050 in the contiguous 48 states (U.S. DHHS). The Bureau of Census income criteria to determine poverty status consists of several thresholds including family size and number of family members under 18 years of age. In 1999, and reported in the 2000 Census, there were 12 individuals and 2 families with incomes below the poverty level in Cooper (see Table E-10).

Table E-10 POVERTY STATUS IN 1999

Poverty Status in 1999	Cooper		Washington County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Below poverty level				
<b>Individuals</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6,272</b>	<b>19.0</b>
Persons 18 years and over	12	100.0	4,524	17.8
Persons 65 years and over	2	16.2	1,076	19.2
<b>Families</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,319</b>	<b>14.2</b>
With related children under 18 years	0	0.0	861	20.3
With related children under 5 years	0	0.0	312	23.5

Source: U.S. Census

## SALES

Taxable sales are one of the few available indicators of the actual size, growth, and character of an economic region. The Maine Revenue Services does not provide information on taxable sales disaggregated by retail sector at the municipal level for all sectors for Cooper because of the town's small size. As a result the total figures do not reflect quarterly activity in some sectors that are not reported in the table. All figures in Table E-11 are in real dollars, not adjusted for inflation.

According to the data provided by Maine Revenue Services, Cooper had a significant decrease in total taxable sales for the period of 2004 to 2008. This is a reflection of the closure in 2007 of the only food store in the town. Consumer sales constituted approximately 99 percent of total taxable sales for Cooper in 2008. At the county level, total consumer sales constituted more than 92 percent of total taxable sales.

Table E-11 TAXABLE SALES IN THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS

Selected Retail Sectors	Washington County			Cooper		
	Annual Total Sales 2004	Annual Total Sales 2008	2004-2008 % Chg	Annual Total Sales 2004	Annual Total Sales 2008	2004-2008 % Chg (decrease)
Business Operating	15,146.0	17,569.4	16.0%	0.2	0.3	0.5%
Building Supplies	30,582.4	34,668.3	13.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Food Store	32,315.3	41,373.9	28.0%	64.2	0	(100%)
General Merchandise	55,988.7	56,432.9	0.8%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other Retail	12,868.7	14,415.6	12.0%	0.3	3.2	9.66%
Auto Transportation	29,088.9	27,496.4	-5.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Restaurant/Lodging	25,311.8	31,334.3	23.8%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Consumer Sales	186,155.8	205,721.3	10.9%	64.5	3.2	(95.0%)
Total Taxable Sales	201,301.8	223,290.7	10.5%	64.7	3.5	(94.6%)

Source: Maine Revenue Service 2009

Below are the definitions of each retail sector:

Consumer Retail Sales:	Total taxable retail sales to consumers.
Total Retail Sales:	Includes Consumer Retail Sales plus special types of sales and rentals to businesses where the tax is paid directly by the buyer (such as commercial or industrial oil purchase).
Building Supply:	Durable equipment sales, contractors' sales, hardware stores and lumberyards.
Food Stores:	All food stores from large supermarkets to small corner food stores. The values here are snacks and non-food items only, since food intended for home consumption is not taxed.
General Merchandise:	In this sales group are stores carrying lines generally carried in large department stores. These include clothing, furniture, shoes, radio-TV, household durable goods, home furnishing, etc.
Other Retail:	This group includes a wide selection of taxable sales not covered elsewhere. Examples are dry good stores, drug stores, jewelry stores, sporting good stores, antique dealers, morticians, bookstores, photo supply stores, gift shops, etc.
Auto Transportation:	This sales group includes all transportation related retail outlets. Included are auto dealers, auto parts, aircraft dealers, motorboat dealers, automobile rental, etc.
Restaurant/Lodging:	All stores selling prepared food for immediate consumption. The Lodging group includes only rental tax.

**PUBLIC OPINION**

In the public survey, conducted in early 2009, home based businesses were strongly supported. Also supported were professional business and some retail uses. All of the development associated with recreational facilities, recreational equipment sales and services, guiding and seasonal camping were strongly favored. Casino and gaming facilities were not favored, nor were adult entertainment facilities. Consistent with this sentiment, respondents favor low scale tourism developments rather than large operations like resorts. One of the most strongly disfavored activities was salvage and junk facilities. Particularly supported was a gas station and convenience store. The written comments speak to a desire for small scale operations in keeping with the quiet rural nature of the town as did the responses to different types of agriculture.

**SUMMARY**

Cooper is a small community primarily dependant on regional sources of employment. Most residents rely on wage and salary income and retirees compose a larger part of the population compared to the county as a whole. The top three sectors of employment for Cooper are 'Education, health and social services'; 'Construction; and 'Manufacturing'. The residents of Cooper have income levels that are higher than residents of Washington County as a whole. However, with the aging of our population, the size the workforce continues to decrease. Living in a rural area limits employment opportunities and increases the costs of commuting to

the service centers where many of the newly created jobs are located. Our local government should strive to encourage and maintain appropriate development that will better employ residents. Growth needs to be channeled to areas of town capable of handling development while incurring minimal cost to the municipality.

## **F. HOUSING**

The housing stock is the basis for our town's tax base, and housing represents the major investment of most individuals. The goal of this section is to document housing conditions and encourage affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Cooper residents.

### **HOUSING UNITS**

#### **Number of Units**

In 2000, Cooper had a total of 165 housing units. If the 2000 census is compared only to the 1990 census it appears that during the 1990s, the town recorded a near doubling (98.8% percent increase) in its housing stock, compared to almost 15 percent for Washington County and 11 percent for the state – see Table 1. However, this magnitude of an increase did not pass the “straight face” test with the Comprehensive Plan Committee. When the 1980 census data is examined (see Table F-1) it appears that the 1990 census missed a significant portion of housing units in Cooper<sup>1</sup>. The percentage increase in the number of housing units in Cooper between 1980 and 2000 (from 129 to 165) is only 27.9%. This magnitude of an increase makes sense to the members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, many of whom have served as assessors or on the Planning Board during the 1980-2000 time period.

As noted in the Population Section, in the 1990s Cooper experienced a 16.9% increase in population and close to a 10.07% percent decline in average household size to 2.59 persons per household. Both factors, increasing population and reduction in household size, account for some of the increase in the number of houses.

Again, if one only looks at the change between 1990 and 2000, seasonal units increased by 157.9% adding 60 units of seasonal housing. However, according to the 1980 census there were 81 seasonal units in Cooper but only 38 seasonal units in the 1990 census. According to the Cooper assessment records, there were no large losses of seasonal units between 1980 and 1990. So it is highly likely that census workers in April of 1990 did not know of (or bother to find) over 40 seasonal units that were probably located on camp roads when ice was still on the lake and seasonal roads were deeply rutted with mud. Seasonal units increased from 81 to 98 units in the 20 year period between 1980 and 2000. This is only a 21% increase and not the huge apparent increase if only the 1990 and 2000 census numbers are compared.

Housing for seasonal purposes constitutes 59 percent of the housing stock in Cooper. Thus second home development of shorefront properties has a larger impact than year-round population on the number of housing units in Cooper and this trend is expected to continue. Given the very large inaccuracies evident in the 1990 census of seasonal housing in Cooper, any analysis of growth trends in housing in Cooper must include the 1980 census even after the 2010 census is complete.

---

<sup>1</sup> The 1990 Census also appears to have undercounted the number of housing units in Baileyville, Baring Plantation, Calais and East Machias but a full examination of that discrepancy is beyond the scope of this document.

Table F-1 NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS - TOTAL AND SEASONAL  
**NOTE- SEE TEXT FOR ANALYSIS OF INACCURATE CENSUS FIGURES**

	Total # of units				Seasonal units				
	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000	1980	1990	2000	% Change	% of total in 2000
Alexander	269	326	361	10.1%		130	140	7.7%	39%
Baileyville	911	899	927	3.1%		89	101	13.5%	11%
Baring Plantation	130	114	136	19.3%		3	20	566.7%	15%
Calais	1880	1773	1921	8.3%		68	154	126.7%	8%
<b>Cooper</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>98.8%</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>157.9%</b>	<b>59%</b>
Crawford	69	92	97	5.4%		46	52	13.0%	54%
East Central Unorganized Territory (Edmunds, Marion, Trescott, Twps 14, 18, 19)***	n/a	438	620	41.6%		142	242	70.4%	39%
East Machias	659	635	793	24.9%		123	181	47.2%	23%
Machias	898	1043	1125	7.7%		24	32	33.3%	3%
Meddybemps	125	139	182	30.9%		78	99	26.9%	54%
Washington County	18,149	19,124	21,919	14.62%		4,046	5,374	32.8%	25%
Maine		587,045	651,901	11.05%		88,039	101,470	15.3%	16%

Source: U.S. Census – Summary Files 1 and 3

\*\*\*: Townships 14 and 18 were renamed in 2009 as Cathance Twp and Berry Twp

Residential development has decreased in recent years with the majority of building activity (sheds/decks/garages/additions) taking place on already developed properties (see Table F-2). Single-unit housing is expected to be the primary type of future development as seasonal units are converted to year round use, especially on shorefront properties in Cooper. However, the long trend of high gas prices may be dampening year round development pressure as fewer people choose the long commutes demanded by Cooper residents to reach to regional employment opportunities.

Table F-2 RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS (TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION)

	Stick-built Houses	Mobile/Modular Homes	Sheds/Decks/Garages/Additions	Total
2003	2		7	9
2004	3		6	9
2005			5	5
2006	1		5	6
2007	1		2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>32</b>

Source: Cooper building permits

Cooper has some older housing stock (see Table F-3) but less than what is commonly found in other parts of the county or the state. Nationwide, Maine ranks first in the proportion (35%) of the housing stock that was built prior to 1940. Over eighteen percent of Cooper housing stock dates prior to 1940, substantially less than in the county or the state. A larger proportion of the

town's housing stock was built in the 1970s compared to the county and the state with comparable proportionate increases in recent decades.

Some of this stock will be removed and more seasonal houses will be constructed. As the population ages, household size is likely to continue to decrease even while some households may convert to a primary household with a secondary apartment.

Table F-3 YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT

Years	Cooper		Washington		Maine
	Number	%	Number	%	%
1990 to March 2000	<b>24</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	3,145	14.4%	14.6%
1980 to 1989	<b>21</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	3,203	14.6%	16.0%
1970 to 1979	<b>44</b>	<b>26.7%</b>	4,038	18.4%	15.9%
1940 to 1969	<b>46</b>	<b>27.9%</b>	4,359	19.9%	24.4%
1939 or earlier	<b>30</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	7,174	32.7%	29.1%
Total housing stock	<b>165</b>	<b>100%</b>	21,919	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census – Summary File 3

**Structure Type**

The distribution of housing unit types is an important indicator of affordability, density, and the character of the community. Housing units in structures are presented in Table F-4. In 2000, one-unit structures represented over 90 percent of the town’s housing units while mobile homes and trailers accounted for more than 8 percent. The number of mobile homes and trailers increased between 1990 and 2000 as did their percentage contribution to the total housing stock. Mobile homes and trailers are located on individual lots, not in mobile home parks.

Table F-4 HOUSING UNITS IN STRUCTURE

	Alexander		Baileyville		Baring Plantation		Calais		Cooper		Crawford		East Central Unorganized Territory (Edmunds, Marion, Trescott, Twps 14, 18, 19)		East Machias		Machias		Meddybemps		Washington County		
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	
	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
One-unit	255 78.2%	296 82%	619 68.9%	677 73%	76 66.7%	94 69.1%	1154 65.1%	1264 65.8%	<b>58</b> <b>69.9%</b>	<b>149</b> <b>90.3%</b>	83 90.2%	90 92.8%	341 77.9%	555 89.5%	503 79.2%	651 82.1%	578 55.4%	630 56%	68 48.9%	170 93.4%	14,397 75.3%	17,080 78.0%	
Multi-unit	2 0.6%	3 0.8%	118 13.1%	116 12.5%	3 2.6%	2 1.5%	384 21.7%	465 24.2%	<b>0</b> <b>0%</b>	<b>0</b> <b>0%</b>	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	11 1.7%	35 4.4%	287 27.5%	347 30.8%	0 0%	0 0%	1,473 7.7%	1,931 8.8%	
Mobile Home trailer	60 18.4%	60 16.6%	152 16.9%	132 14.2%	34 29.8%	38 27.9%	214 12.1%	192 10%	<b>4</b> <b>4.8%</b>	<b>14</b> <b>8.5%</b>	9 9.8%	7 7.2%	54 12.3%	65 10.5%	101 15.9%	105 13.2%	155 14.9%	144 12.8%	13 9.4%	12 6.6%	3,254 17.0%	2,786 12.7%	
Total units*	326 100%	361 100%	899 100%	927 100%	114 100%	136 100%	1773 100%	1921 100%	<b>83</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>165</b> <b>100%</b>	92 100%	97 100%	438 100%	620 100%	635 100%	793 100%	1043 100%	1125 100%	139 100%	182 100%	19,124 100.0%	21,919 100%	

Source: U.S. Census – Summary File 3

Overall, mobile homes are in good condition. Those mobile home units constructed pre-1976 which locate in town must meet the requirements of the Building Code and the State Electric Code.

## HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Table F-5 shows the proportional make-up of housing units by general physical condition in Cooper for the most recent years for which this information is available.

Table F-5 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

	Number	Percent
<b>Total housing units in 2000</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>100.0</b>
ROOMS in 2000		
1 room	2	1.2%
2 rooms	14	8.5%
3 rooms	31	18.8%
4 rooms	37	22.4%
5 rooms	29	17.6%
6 rooms	27	16.4%
7 rooms	10	6.1%
8 rooms	15	9.1%
9 or more rooms	0	0%
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS in 2000		
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	5	3.0%
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	2	1.2%
No telephone service	5	3.0%
HOUSE HEATING FUEL		
Utility gas	0	0%
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	2	1.2%
Electricity	0	0%
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	40	24.2%
Coal or coke	0	0%
Wood	19	11.5%
Solar energy	0	0%
Other fuel	0	0%
No fuel used	0	0%

Source: U.S. Census – Summary File 3

The numbers do not add up to the total number of housing units in the Selected Characteristics nor in the House Heating Fuel sections of Table F-5. This reflects a lack of reporting for many units that are used seasonally in Cooper. Current residents are aware of several units that may use both electricity and gas as a source of heating fuel. There are others designed for passive solar heat as well.

HOME OCCUPANCY

Tenure

Home ownership is a good indicator of the overall standard of living in an area. One way to trace home ownership change over time is to compare owners and renters as a proportion of total occupied housing, as illustrated in Table F-6. A high rate of owner-occupied housing is typical of a predominately residential community such as Cooper. In 1990 and 2000, the proportions of owner and renter-occupied housing units remained fairly stable at the local and county level.

Table F-6 HOUSING TENURE

Tenure	Alexander		Baileyville		Baring Plantation		Calais		Cooper		Crawford		East Central Unorganized Territory (Edmunds, Marion, Trescott, Twps 14, 18, 19)		East Machias		Machias		Meddybemps		Washington County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %	Num %
Occupied housing units	161 100%	196 100%	770 100%	726 100%	101 100%	113 100%	1536 100%	1486 100%	<b>43</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>56</b> <b>100%</b>	37 100%	41 100%	251 100%	315 100%	469 100%	540 100%	<b>943</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>939</b> <b>100%</b>	54 100%	67 100%	13,418 100%	14,118 100%
Owner-occupied housing units	140 87%	179 91.3%	618 80.3%	592 81.5%	90 89.1%	88 77.9%	1055 68.7%	938 63.1%	<b>41</b> <b>95.3%</b>	<b>54</b> <b>96.4%</b>	35 94.6%	36 87.8%	222 88.4%	267 84.8%	402 85.7%	432 80%	<b>578</b> <b>61.3%</b>	<b>527</b> <b>56.1%</b>	50 92.6%	61 91%	10,568 78.8%	10,969 77.7%
Renter-occupied housing units	21 13%	17 8.7%	152 19.7%	134 18.5%	11 10.9%	25 22.1%	481 31.3%	548 36.9%	<b>2</b> <b>4.7%</b>	<b>2</b> <b>3.6%</b>	2 5.4%	5 12.2%	29 11.6%	48 15.2%	67 14.3%	108 20%	<b>365</b> <b>38.7%</b>	<b>412</b> <b>43.9%</b>	4 7.4%	6 9.0%	2,8501 21.2%	3,149 22.3%

Source: U.S. Census – Summary File 1

VACANCY RATE

In 2000, 65 percent of the town’s total housing units were vacant; over 94 percent of these vacant units were for seasonal or recreational use. Countywide in 2000, 68 percent of vacant units were for seasonal or recreational use. The rental vacancy rate in 2000 for Cooper was 33.3 percent, compared to 13.3 percent for Washington County. The data suggest an adequate supply of housing for purchase and for rent.

Table F-7 HOUSING OCCUPANCY

Tenure	Alexander		Baileyville		Baring Plantation		Calais		Cooper		Crawford		East Central Unorganized Territory (Edmunds, Marion, Trescott, Twps 14, 18, 19)		East Machias		Machias		Meddybemps		Washington County		
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	
	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num	Num.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>All Housing Units</b>	326 100%	359 100%	899 100%	927 100%	114 100%	146 100%	1773 100%	1,921 100%	<b>83</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>160</b> <b>100%</b>	92 100%	99 100%	427 100%	609 100%	1043 100%	1129 100%	635 100%	776 100%	133 100%	176 100%	19,124 100%	21,919 100%	
Occupied housing units	161 49.4%	196 54.6%	770 85.7%	726 78.3%	101 88.6%	113 77.4%	1536 86.6%	1,486 77.4%	<b>43</b> <b>51.8%</b>	<b>56</b> <b>35%</b>	37 40.2%	41 41.4%	251 0%	315 51.7%	943 90.4%	939 83.2%	469 73.9%	540 69.6%	54 40.6%	67 38.1%	13,418 70.2%	14,118 64.4%	
Vacant <sup>2</sup> housing units	165 50.6%	163 45.4%	129 14.3%	201 21.7%	13 11.4%	33 22.6%	237 13.4%	435 22.6%	<b>40</b> <b>48.2%</b>	<b>104</b> <b>65%</b>	55 59.8	58 58.6%	176 %	294 48.3%	100 9.6%	190 16.8%	166 26.1%	236 30.4%	79 59.4%	109 61.9%	5,706 29.8%	7,801 35.6%	

Source: U.S. Census – Summary File 1

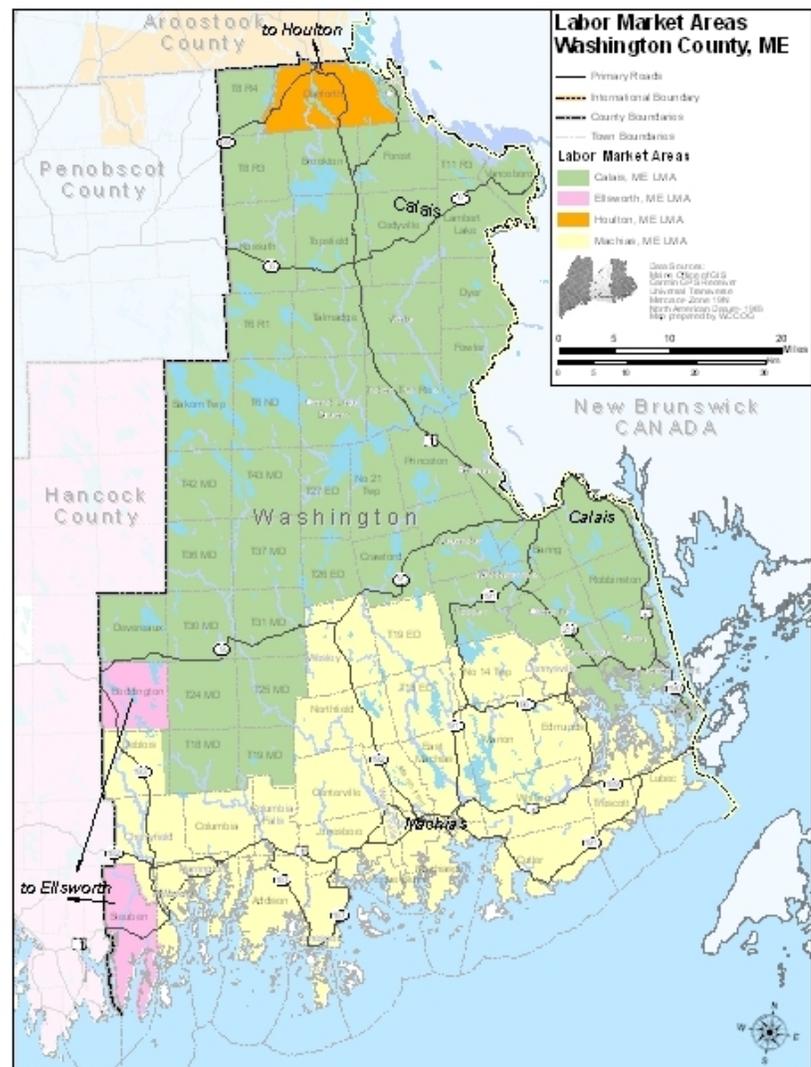
<sup>2</sup> Vacant housing includes those that are truly vacant as well as those that are used seasonally.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The affordability of housing is of critical importance for any municipality. High costs are burdensome to individuals, governments, and the economy. Excessively high housing costs force low and moderate-income residents to leave the community, thus reducing labor force size.

Many factors contribute to the challenge of finding affordable housing, including: local and regional employment opportunities, e.g., in-migration to job growth areas; older residents living longer lives at home; more single parent households; and generally smaller household sizes than in previous years. Those Mainers most often affected by a lack of affordable housing include: older citizens facing increasing maintenance and property taxes; young couples unable to afford their own home; single parents trying to provide a decent home; low income workers seeking an affordable place to live within commuting distance; and young adults seeking housing independent of their parents.

The State Goal for housing is to encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens. To determine housing affordability, this section examines the income distribution of the town, the county and the state. It also relates this to the average selling price of homes and the average rents in the housing market in which Cooper is situated. This analysis is customarily done at the individual town level. However there is no town-level data available for Cooper so we must examine the numbers at the housing market level – the Calais Labor Market Area (LMA) Housing market<sup>3</sup> (see map at right).



<sup>3</sup> Calais LMA Housing market includes the following communities:

Baileyville; Baring Plt.; Brookton Township; Calais; Charlotte; Codyville Plt.; Cooper; Crawford; East Central

Additionally, we show the percentages of households who pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing, which is a measure of unaffordable housing as defined by the State. We show Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) affordability index data for the housing market to which Cooper belongs. Importantly, we demonstrate that the town has met its obligation under the Growth Management Act for ensuring that a certain percentage of new housing is affordable and lay out strategies for increasing the percent of affordable housing in the housing stock.

### Definitions of Affordability

Affordable housing means decent, safe, and sanitary living accommodations that are affordable to very low, low, and moderate-income people. The State of Maine defines an affordable owner-occupied housing unit as one for which monthly housing costs do not exceed approximately 30% of monthly income, and an affordable rental unit as one that has a rent not exceeding 30% of the monthly income (including utilities). The kinds of housing that are affordable at these income levels are often small homes on smaller lots and can include manufactured housing, multi-family housing, government-assisted housing, and group and foster care facilities. Increased density and reduced frontage requirements can contribute to a community's affordable housing stock.

Based on MSHA figures, in 2007 the median household income was \$30,530 in Washington County. There is no data available on the median home price relative to the median income at the town level. As noted above, Cooper is part of the larger Calais LMA Housing Market and the MSHA reports that the housing affordability index in this housing market for the year 2007 was 0.66 (under 1.00 equals unaffordable; while over 1.00 equals affordable).

The housing affordability index for the Calais LMA Housing Market is compared to all of Washington County in Table F-8 for the period between 2003 and 2007. The trend at both the county and the Calais housing market level is toward unaffordable. While the index indicated that housing was greater than 1 and therefore affordable in 2003 (index of 1.02 and 1.12 respectively), the index has dropped below 1 since then.

Table F-8 AFFORDABILITY INDEX  
CALAIS LMA HOUSING MARKET AND WASHINGTON COUNTY 2003-2007

Year	Calais LMA Housing Market					Washington County				
	Index	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home Price	Home Price Affordable to Median Income	Index	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home Price	Home Price Affordable to Median Income
2003	1.12	74,000	29,001	25,892	82,885	1.02	79,000	28,087	27,607	80,372
2004	0.85	95,500	28,485	33,709	80,701	0.87	92,000	27,953	32,302	79,613
2005	0.55	156,700	29,702	54,253	85,788	0.89	95,000	29,105	32,723	84,495
2006	0.72	120,000	29,730	41,044	86,920	0.73	120,000	29,913	40,988	87,576
2007	0.66	132,500	29,979	45,344	87,601	0.81	110,000	30,530	37,567	89,395

---

Washington unorg.; Eastport; Grand Lake Stream; Lambert Lake; Meddybemps; North Washington unorg. ; Passamaquoddy Indian Township; Passamaquoddy Pleasant Point; Pembroke; Perry; Princeton; Robbinston; Talmadge; Topsfield; Vanceboro; Waite

---

**Housing Selling Prices**

As the selling price for houses is rising the percentage of homes that are unattainable is rising to very high proportions of the population. According to MSHA almost 70 percent of households in the Calais LMA Housing market are unable to afford the median home price. This proportion is higher than in the County, Congressional District 2 and the State (see Table F-9).

**Table F-9 UNATTAINABLE HOMES AND HOUSEHOLDS UNABLE TO AFFORD MEDIAN HOME IN 2007**

Location	Percentage of Unattainable Homes	Affordable Homes Sold	Unattainable Homes Sold	Percent of Households Unable to Afford Median Home Price	Number of Households Unable to Afford Median Home Price
Calais LMA Housing Market	91.7%	1	11	67.3%	4,226
Maine	73.1%	3,410	9,252	65.8%	369,172
Washington County	65.1%	15	28	59.5%	8,689
Congressional District 2	64.3%	1,713	3,086	58.2%	154,521

Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2008

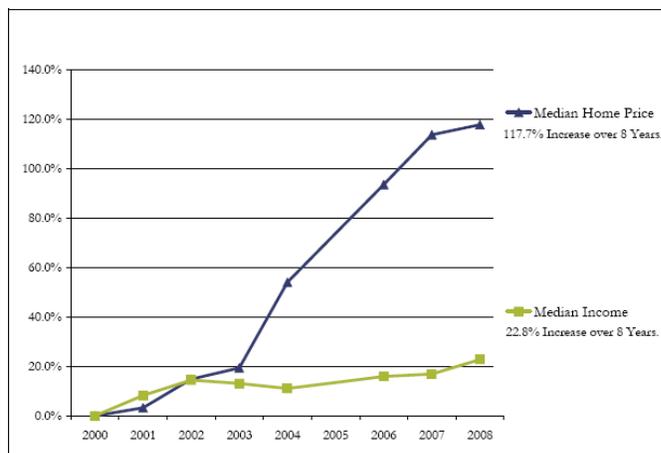
Table F-10 provides the distribution of extremely low, very low, low, and moderate income households in the Calais LMA housing market. Comparing these incomes to the income needed to afford the median home price (\$45,344 in 2007 – see Table F-8), confirms that 67% of households in the Calais LMA housing market cannot afford the median home price (as noted in Table F-9) and shows that many households in the low, very low and extremely low categories are significantly below this level.

**Table F-10 HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION IN CALAIS AND WASHINGTON COUNTY HOUSING MARKETS IN 2007**

	Calais LMA Housing Market			Washington County		
	2007 Households	Income	% of Households	2007 Households	Income	% of Households
Extremely Low <30%	845	\$8,994	13.5%	2,034	\$9,159	14.0%
Very Low <50%	1,611	\$14,989	25.7%	3,682	\$15,265	25.3%
Low Income <80%	2,562	\$23,983	40.8%	5,954	\$24,424	40.9%
Moderate Income <150%	4,203	\$44,968	67.0%	9,969	\$45,796	68.4%

Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2008

**Relative Increases in Income and Home Price:**



### Renter Occupied Housing Affordability

Turning to renter statistics Table F-11 describes average rents, the income needed to afford an average 2 bedroom rent and those who could not afford them. As with home ownership a very high proportion (3/4 of renter households) are unable to afford the average 2 bedroom rent. Only year round rentals are considered, as seasonal housing rentals are not reported. The rents shown are reported by the tenants and take into account the subsidies some receive in the form of the federal Section 8 housing subsidy to low income residents.

Table F-11 RENTER HOUSEHOLDS THAT CAN'T AFFORD  
THE AVERAGE 2 BEDROOM RENT IN 2007

Location	Income Needed to Afford Average 2 Bedroom Rent	Average 2 Bedroom Rent	Percent of Households Unable to Afford Average 2 Bedroom Rent	Number of Households Unable to Afford Average 2 Bedroom Rent
Calais LMA Housing Market	\$33,100	\$828	75.5%	1,083
Maine	\$33,882	\$847	58.0%	90,661
Washington County	\$32,287	\$807	72.1%	2,331
Congressional District 2	\$30,386	\$760	58.2%	41,528

Source: Maine State Housing Authority, 2008

The only town level rental data for Cooper is from 1999 (reported in the US Census) for 3 renter occupied housing units. At that time all three households reported that their gross rent was less than 20% of their household income and between \$200 and \$299. MSHA reports that in 2008, 47 Section 8 Vouchers were issued for rental housing in the Calais LMA housing market. However, given the size of the rental market in Calais it appears that the Calais LMA market level data may not represent the rental market in Cooper.

### Affordability and the Growth Management Act

A minimum policy required by the Maine Growth Management Act is for every municipality "...to seek to achieve at least 10% of all housing built or placed during the next decade be affordable." During the five-year period from 2003 to 2007, 7 permits were issued for residential housing construction – see Table F-2. Cooper meets the requirement of the Act if the town sought to provide one (10% = 0.7 units) low-income units in this period. Within this period, it is not clear that any affordable housing were built. Often mobile/modular housing is an affordable housing option. However there were no mobile/modular units built between 2003 and 2007.

### Seasonal and Year Round Housing Differences

There are effectively two housing markets in Cooper: seasonal and year round. Seasonal housing is spread throughout town with most clustering along waterfront areas, particularly the shoreline of Cathance Lake. There are many units that are strictly seasonal and owned by Maine residents within the county. Some of these are being converted to year round occupancy. And some of the newer units tend to be larger and while they are seasonal and function primarily as vacation homes for non-residents, they are built for year round occupancy.

### Affordable Housing Remedies

The state recommends a variety of ways that a town can address the need for affordable housing. This can be very difficult for a small community like Cooper because the traditional recommendations may *not* apply, including:

1. The relaxation of zoning ordinance and building code requirements that tend to increase building costs. **Cooper has no town wide zoning or building code at present. If either is established, it will be sensitive to the need to lessen the potential costs imposed on low-income residents.**
2. Take steps to allow mobile homes and modular homes in more areas. **At present the town does not limit the location of these types of units.**
3. Provide town sewer, water and roads to new parts of town thus “opening up” land for new homes. **The town has no water or sewer systems and does not anticipate ever constructing them.**

Given the lack of current land use ordinances that would tend to increase housing costs, the town believes that a regional approach may best meet the need of its low and moderate-income residents. The town would encourage accessory apartments, so-called ‘mother-in-law’ apartments, and will put language in proposed ordinances and building codes as needed to do so.

Large lot sizes, while seemingly protecting the rural character of the community, can create the potential of driving land prices higher, thus driving housing costs higher, thereby reducing the affordability of housing in the community. Accordingly, this will be considered in the future land use section of this plan. Smaller lot sizes are proposed in the growth area proposed in the Land Use section of the plan. The town will also inform itself of the opportunities, technologies and permitting requirements for small scale community sewage treatment systems to enable small affordable lots to be created that will not contaminate source water protection areas or surface waters.

### Elderly Housing

Elderly housing for long time residents who wish to remain in the area is available at several housing complexes in the region including in Calais (Methodist Homes, Calais Congregate Housing, St. Croix Apartments, Hornbrook Apartments and High Point Apartments) and in Machais (Marshall Manor). There are also several other regional providers providing assisted living complexes for the elderly. While our needs for elderly housing are being met currently, we plan to reexamine this issue as our population ages.

Table F-15 AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER

2000 COOPER HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE	Number	Percent
Occupied housing units	56	100%
Family households	42	75%
Non-family households	14	25%
Households with individuals under 18 years	21	37.5%
Households with individuals over 65 years	13	23%

Source: U.S. Census – Summary File 1

**Housing Programs**

In addition to ensuring that ordinances do not significantly increase construction costs, the town will also compile information on affordable housing programs for residents to consult. There is no town office so this material will more than likely be available through regional organizations like the Washington Hancock Community Agency and the Washington County Council of Governments. These resources are updated on a regular basis and include such programs as those offered through the Maine State Housing Authority, e.g. Rental Loan Program, Section 8, SHARP, Supportive Housing, and Vouchers, DEP septic and wells grants, and USDA Rural Development, among other organizations.

Local, state, and federal governments have a number of different means of subsidizing housing costs for eligible citizens. In most cases the efforts of the different levels of government are integrated, with funding and operation and jurisdictional fields overlapping.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the primary federal agency dealing with affordable housing. Rural Development (RD), formerly Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), also deals with affordable housing. The Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) is the State's agency for such issues. The town of Cooper does not have a local housing authority and does not have a public welfare department to oversee general assistance.

Subsidized units are built with state or federal monies for the express purpose of providing housing to lower income individuals and families. A housing project or development may be entirely formed by subsidized units, or the project may be of mixed uses. Subsidized units are typically available to individuals below certain income guidelines, and residents are expected to pay a fixed percentage of their income as rent.

Housing is also subsidized through certificates and vouchers. Especially when subsidized units are not available, the MSHA will provide monies for citizens to use as payment for rent for non-public units. The town is also reimbursed by the State for general assistance money that may be given to citizens with short-term immediate needs for housing. Finally, low interest loans through the federal or state governments are also a form of subsidy.

**Public Survey Input**

Questions on the 2009 Public Survey (see Chapter K – Town Survey) asked about desired types of housing and development. Questions on housing in the survey were focused on the types of strategies towns can implement to make housing more affordable to residents. Respondents generally did not favor dimensional regulations that allowed greater density. Neither did they favor areas in growth areas for mobile home parks though opinions were not as strong against this concept as they were against regulatory options.

Respondents do favor allowing accessory apartments and participating in a regional affordable housing coalition. Opinions were mixed on creating a community affordable housing committee.

**SUMMARY**

Analysis of housing data from the 1980, 1990 and 2000 censuses revealed that the 1990 census significantly undercounted seasonal housing in Cooper. For instance, if one only looks at the change between 1990 and 2000, seasonal units increased by 60 units or 157.9%. However, according to the 1980 census there were 81 seasonal units in Cooper but only 38 seasonal units in the 1990 census. According to the Cooper assessment records, there were no large losses of seasonal units between 1980 and 1990. So it seems likely that census workers in April of 1990 did not know of (or bother to find) over 40 seasonal units. These units were probably located on camp roads when ice was still on the lake and seasonal roads were deeply rutted with mud. Seasonal units increased from 81 to 98 units in the 20 year period between 1980 and 2000. This is only a 21% increase and not the huge apparent increase if only the 1990 and 2000 census numbers are compared. Given the very large inaccuracies evident in the 1990 census of seasonal housing in Cooper, any analysis of growth trends in housing in Cooper must include the 1980 census even after the 2010 census is complete.

Affordable housing is often defined as not costing more than 30% of household income. The data reviewed demonstrate first that town level data is not available. However within the Calais Labor Market Area (LMA) housing market the cost of housing is not affordable for most people (75%) in the community. The home price that could be afforded at the housing market median household income of \$29,979 was \$87,601. Those with lower incomes, approximately 75% percent of households in Cooper, are losing access to the housing market and the price of real estate in Cooper is increasing.

Existing land use ordinances do not impose significant costs on the cost of building homes and the majority of people live in owner-occupied single-family housing. The desire for vacation homes on waterfront properties by non-residents has raised the value, and assessment, of many properties in Cooper. There is a range of new housing in town, including mobile or manufactured homes. The percentage of homes owned by those in the workforce is likely to decline further while the percentage of homes owned by retirees - both those from away and natives - will increase.

## G. TRANSPORTATION

Communities depend on well-maintained transportation systems. Accessibility to transportation is one of the primary factors in the location of businesses and residents within Cooper.

The town is a small “bedroom” community with a significant portion of Route 191 that serves as both “Main St.” and a regional collector road. Cooper is dominated by the condition of Route 191. It is considered “unbuilt” in transportation engineering terms and, before reconstruction on a small portion of Cooper Hill and some resurfacing in the summer of 2010, is in terrible condition throughout the town. This issue affects businesses, the overall safety and convenience of residents, as well as property values.



Photo point 1 – see Map 2

The goal of this section is to plan for efficient maintenance and improvement of our transportation facilities and services in order to accommodate anticipated development.

### ROADS INVENTORY

The majority of roads in Cooper originated in the early days as pathways or carriage trails. These roads followed the easiest routes and were not concerned with sight distances, sharp corners, the weight load of trucks, or intersection design. Some of our roads were improved over the years to accommodate increased traffic, higher speeds and larger vehicles. In the last decade, the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) through its Local Roads Assistance Program has attempted to assist municipalities in improving further these roads to meet state and national safety design standards.

Roads can be divided into three classifications by function: arterial, collector, and local.

1. Arterials are roadways that serve long distance, high-speed through-traffic between communities, and are maintained by the state. The most important travel routes in the state, state highways, are arterials. Interstate highways may function as arterials. Arterials are major roadways which serve long distance through-traffic. Access to adjacent land is often provided.
2. Collectors gather and distribute traffic to and from arterials and generally provide access to abutting properties. Collectors serve places with smaller population densities, are often some distance from main travel routes, and often are maintained in part by the

state. Collector roads are roadways which connect local streets to arterials, and generally provide access to adjacent land.

- Local roads are all roads not in the arterial or collector classification. Local roads are maintained by municipalities, provide access to adjacent land areas and usually carry low volumes of traffic.

There are no miles of arterial, 10.98 miles of collector and 13.22 miles of local public roads. A listing of all roads within Cooper with their classification, length, maintenance responsibility and overall condition can be found in Table 1, their geographic location is illustrated on Map 2: Public Facilities and Transportation.

Table G-1: ROADWAY INVENTORY

Roadway	Arterial, Collector, Local, Public Easement	Length in Miles	Jurisdiction	Surface	Condition
Cooper Hwy–Route 191	Collector	7.84	State	Paved	Poor/Abysmal
North Union–Cooper Rd.	Collector	3.14	State	Paved	Excellent
Breakneck Road	Local/Public Easement	2.16	Town	Gravel/Dirt	Good (first 1/10 mile); remainder impassable
Dodge Road	Local	0.25	Town	Dirt	Fair/Good
East Ridge Road	Local	3.64	Town	Paved/Dirt	Good
Green Hill Road	Local	3.16	Town	Gravel	Good
Grove Pond Road	Local	0.99	Town	Gravel	Good
Vining Road	Local	0.74	Town	Gravel	Good
Crowe Road	Private	2.28	Private	Dirt	Fair/Good
Arbuckle Road	Private	0.29	Private	Gravel	Good
Blueberry Hill Lane	Private	0.5	Private	Gravel	Good
Callies Way	Private	0.47	Private	Gravel	Good
Camp Road	Private	1.59	Private	Gravel	Poor
Cathance Lane	Private	0.47	Private	Gravel	Good
Chub Cove Road	Private	0.52	Private	Gravel	Fair/Good
Cove Road	Private	0.31	Private	Gravel	Poor/Fair
Day Road	Private	0.42	Private	Gravel	Poor/Fair
Dead End Road	Private	0.15	Private	Gravel	Poor/Fair
Hallowell Drive	Private	0.14	Private	Gravel	Poor/Fair
Hold Road	Private	0.04	Private	Gravel	Fair
Murphy Point Road	Private	0.55	Private	Gravel	Fair
Old Crawford Road	Private	1.33	Private	Gravel	Impassable
Old Mill Road	Private	0.22	Private	Gravel	Poor/Fair
Pine Lane	Private	0.12	Private	Gravel	Good
Race Track Road	Private	0.05	Private	Gravel	Foot path, no longer passable
Robinson Road	Private	0.86	Private	Gravel	Good
Stony Lane	Private	0.09	Private	Gravel	Fair
Story Road	Private	1.58	Private	Gravel	Poor
Tower Road	Private	0.37	Private	Gravel	Good

Source: Maine DOT, 2009; Cooper Comprehensive Plan committee

Information from the state which classifies roads as town owned or private is antiquated. Research is necessary to clarify actual road status. Town Source material has not been accessible. Since town records have been, and will continue to be transferred to a new, accessible location, we will be able to adequately conduct our research, and will update our data.

## MAINTENANCE

Overall, the public roadways in Cooper are in poor to fair condition. Route 191, the main travel way is in very poor condition. The town does not have a highway department but contracts for road services. Contracts are overseen by the Selectmen. The town works diligently with limited resources to maintain local roads.

The damage that does occur to our roads is largely the result of trucking activity. Harsh weather, which includes rapid changes in weather conditions, is another cause of road deterioration. Roads are most vulnerable to the weight of trucks and other heavy vehicles during the spring thaw, which is also a time of year when many natural resource-based products are transported to market.



Photo point 2 – see Map 2

MDOT is responsible for all the non-local roads. Their authority includes permitting of driveways and entrances, curb cuts, summer maintenance, and traffic flow and safety decisions such as traffic signals, signs, reconstruction and road widening.

The town contracts for snow plowing, salting and sanding each year for town and State roads. The cost is covered from tax appropriations. The state reimburses the town for about 45 percent of the actual costs to the town for the State Roads that the town is mandated to maintain. Total yearly payment to Cooper from DOT is \$12,984.00 (local road 13.22 miles + state aid minor collector miles 10.98 x 1200/mile = \$29,040.00). The amount from DOT does not add up exactly when calculated according to actual road lengths and the formula for reimbursement because all towns got a reduction when the legislature reduced the appropriation in fiscal year 1999. The reimbursement to each town will not drop below the amount received in 1999, which for Cooper was \$12,984.00.

The Maine DOT Local Roads Center provides a “Road Surface Management for Maine Towns” training program, including Road Surface Management System (RSMS) software to identify which road maintenance techniques should be considered for individual roads or streets in a local street network. Introduced in 1990, it is being used by many communities to inventory their road network, record road surface condition data, interpret the surface distress information gathered, and “defend” their road maintenance budgets. The system is generic and provides an objective tool that a municipality can “customize” with its own repair techniques and local costs. The Selectmen should investigate its use and adoption in Cooper. **Road Surface Management System (RSMS)** is a road network pavement management system implemented using a computer based software package. RSMS provides information on the condition, traffic, and importance of roads in a network to create a long-term maintenance program. This helps municipalities apply limited budget resources where they will provide the greatest road quality benefits.

The MDOT prepares a Six-Year Plan, updated every two years, to link their policy based Twenty-Year Plan to the project based and fiscally constrained Biennial Capital Work Plan

(BCWP). The most recent Six-Year Plan was issued in 2003 covering the period 2004-2009. The BCWP's are issued every fiscal biennium. Other state agencies and business interests use the Six-Year Plan as they develop public and private investment strategies.

MDOT has proposed no projects in Cooper in the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan for 2004-2009. There are 3 Cooper projects included in the FY08-09 Biennial Capital Work Plan and one project in the FY10-11 Biennial Capital Work Plan shown in the following table.

Biennial Transportation Improvement Plan	Project Type	Functional Class Route #/Road Name Length	Description	Estimated Cost/ Fund Source
FY10-11	Operational and Safety Improvements	Major Collector Route 191 0.60 miles	Beginning 1.46 miles southerly of the East Ridge Road and extending northerly 0.60 of a mile.	\$200,000. This project will be considered for funding based on the availability of Highway Fund resources.
FY08-09	Maintenance Surface Treatment	Minor Collector Cooper Road 7.58 miles	Beginning at the intersection of Route 191 and extending northerly 7.58 miles to the intersection of Route 9 in Alexander.	\$307,500 - State
FY08-09	Maintenance Surface Treatment	Minor Collector Cooper Road 7.58 miles	Beginning at the intersection of Route 191 and extending northerly 7.58 miles to the intersection of Route 9 in Alexander.	\$256,200 - State
FY08-09	Highway Rehabilitation	Minor Collector Cooper Road 7.58 miles	Beginning at the intersection of Route 191 and extending northerly 7.58 miles to the intersection of Route 9 in Alexander.	\$351,000 - State
FY08-09	Crack Sealing	Major Collector Route 191 4.2 miles	Beginning 0.23 of a mile southerly of East Ridge Road and extending northerly 4.20 miles to 0.02 of a mile southerly of Green Hill Road in Meddybemps.	\$16,277 - Federal \$3,998 - State \$20,275 - Total

The capital improvements proposed in the FY10-11 BCWP sought to address the abysmal condition of Route 191 in Cooper. The section of 191 in photo point 3 is part of the section of Cooper Hill that was resurfaced in July, 2010. There were dozens of long stretches of multiple longitudinal fissures in the



Photo Point 3 – see Map 2

road surface that were 4-8 inches wide and, in some cases, 3-4 inches deep. These are unlikely to reappear where the road was fully reconstructed. Residents anticipate that the areas that were only resurfaced will very quickly return to their former condition due to heavy truck traffic and winter weather conditions.

There are also several areas where the never-paved shoulders are crumbling into the travelled way and



Photo points 4 and 5, see Map 2

where they wash out every year. Most of the shoulders are very soft and many are steeply graded creating very dangerous conditions if a tire goes off the road surface. Large trucks often cross the center line to avoid the shoulders creating additional hazards for smaller vehicles. The portion of Route 191 in photo points 4 and 5 was not repaired in the summer of 2010.

The CD containing the final Comprehensive Plan contains a windshield video of the road conditions during May of 2009 and March of 2010.

**TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND PATTERNS**

Transportation linkages in Cooper consist primarily of State Route 191 which runs in a north-south direction in the southwestern corner of town before bending and running in an east-west direction to the eastern boundary with Meddybemps. Although the population of Washington County has decreased modestly during the 1990s, MDOT states that the total number of vehicle miles traveled in our County has increased by over 13 percent. MDOT estimates the average annual daily traffic volume (AADT) of most state and state aid roadways.

Table 2 shows AADT counts for the most recent year (2004) for which data is available (see Map 2 – Public Facilities and Transportation for location of traffic counts). Traffic counts are also available on the East Ridge Road. The volumes shown below represent both through traffic and local activity.

Table G-2 TRAFFIC VOLUMES (average annual daily traffic volume – AADT)

Roadway	Location	AADT04
Cooper Hwy – Route 191	SR 191 @ NUMBER 14 PLANTATION	1,100
Cooper Hwy – Route 191	SR 191 NE/O IR 473 @ BR# 3855	1,070
Cooper Hwy – Route 191	SR 191 NE/O IR 336 (E RIDGE RD)	1,050
Cooper Hwy – Route 191	SR 191 W/O IR 336	990
North Union – Cooper Road	IR 473 W/O SR 191 @ BR# 3755	450
East Ridge Rd	IR 336 SE/O SR 191	210

Source: Maine Department of Transportation, 2004

Traffic counts taken every few years help the state calculate changes in traffic volume so that road improvements can be designed and built accordingly to handle those changes. AADT volumes do not reflect seasonal variations in traffic or daily peak traffic volume. Instead, AADT volumes help us understand the overall growth or decline of traffic on a roadway and the pattern of traffic on our road networks. The AADT figures do not distinguish between types of vehicles. Thus the volume of truck traffic is not being measured.

Route 191 serves as the primary arterial between the two most populated centers of the county, Machias and Calais, and between the international border and coastal Washington County (also 4 trips/day of trash from Marion Transfer Station to border). The volume of heavy truck traffic is enormous and it is traversing a road that was never designed or constructed to accommodate their volume or their weight.

The result is unsafe conditions particularly at night and in severe weather. The road surface has



Photo point #6, see Map 2

deteriorated as described above (multiple longitudinal cracks, eroding shoulders and road surface) and is nearly impossible to maintain in winter weather because of extensive longitudinal tire ruts that create an undulating road profile from shoulder to shoulder. Photo point 6 is in an area that was only resurfaced in July, 2010.

## LEVEL OF SERVICE

Traffic congestion can lower a roadway's level of service (LOS). There are six levels of service, given letter designations from A to F. LOS A represents the best operating conditions, while LOS F represents the worst. LOS E is defined as the maximum flow or capacity of a system. For most purposes, however, a level of C or D is usually used as the maximum acceptable volume. As an annual average, however, LOS does not reveal the increased congestion during the tourist season. And so, for planning purposes, a seasonally adjusted LOS should be used when analyzing the need for local traffic management improvements.

In Cooper traffic volumes are low relative to the capacity of most roadways and so the LOS has not been affected. Accordingly, MDOT has noted an LOS of A on Route 191 and LOS of A on all other collector roads within the town (see Map 2 Public Facilities and Transportation).

## ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Access Management is the planned location and design of driveways and entrances to public roads to help reduce accidents and prolong the useful life of an arterial. While arterial highways represent only 12% of the state-maintained highway system, they carry 62% of the statewide traffic volume. Maintaining posted speeds on this system means helping people and products move faster, which enhances productivity, reduces congestion-related delays and environmental degradation. By preserving the capacity of the system we have now, we reduce the need to build costly new highway capacity such as new travel lanes and bypasses in the future.

MDOT has established standards, including greater sight distance requirements for the permitting of driveways and entrances for three categories of roadways: mobility arterial corridors<sup>1</sup>, retrograde arterials<sup>2</sup>, and all other state and state-aid roads. Due to the low volume of traffic on our roadways, our town has no roads in the retrograde or mobility corridor categories of roadways, which come under stricter access management standards.

To maintain and improve traffic flows, the Land Use section of this plan and future Land Use Ordinances should include access management performance standards that are in accordance with current law.

## DANGEROUS INTERSECTIONS AND STRETCHES OF ROADS

MDOT provides data on the number and type of crashes. MDOT classifies a “high crash location” as one where at least 8 crashes have occurred in the most recent complete three-year period. The most data of such locations from Maine DOT covers the period 2004–2006. According to Maine DOT there are no high crash locations in Cooper in 2006. The individual crash locations are shown on Map 2 according to type of collision. Residents have pointed out several other areas as dangerous. These areas are described in the following two tables with suggestions for how to address the problem.

**Table G-3 Cooper Dangerous Intersections and Stretches of Road**

Intersection/Road	Safety Issue	Possible Solutions
Route 191	Lack of shoulders; soft shoulders; crumbling shoulders; steep shoulders and deep ditches; reduction in road width with repeated resurfacing	Add 4 foot shoulders with road reconstruction
Route 191	high road crown necessitating truck travel that straddles the center line	Road reconstruction
Route 191	Cyclists travelling on paved road sometimes 2 abreast; truck and vehicle traffic too fast, too many hills;	Need shoulders for bicycles to be safe
Cathance Lane	Turn (90 degrees) to right too sharp for fire truck access	Tree removal

<sup>1</sup> A Mobility Arterial is a non-compact arterial that has a posted speed limit of 40 mph or more and is part of an arterial corridor located between Urban compact Areas or Service Centers that carries an average annual daily traffic of at least 5,000 vehicles per day of at least 50% of its length or is part of a Retrograde Arterial Corridor located between Mobility Arterials.

<sup>2</sup> A Retrograde Arterial is a Mobility Arterial where the access related crash-per-mile rate exceeds the 1999 statewide average for Arterials of the same-posted speed limit.

<b>Intersection/Road</b>	<b>Safety Issue</b>	<b>Possible Solutions</b>
Route 191 and North Union Road (AKA Cooper Road)	Posted speeds too high for when intersection is visible given steep downhill terrain and inadequate warning	Add yellow warning on North Union Road light to warn of STOP ahead

**TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES**

There are no traffic control devices in Cooper and none are anticipated as necessary in the foreseeable future except a yellow warning light at the intersection of the North Union Road and Route 191 (see Table G-3).

**SHOULDERS**

Route 191 has no paved shoulders on either side of the road for the vast majority of its length in the town of Cooper. The shoulders are unpaved and very soft, the ditches are deep and the edge of road surface is crumbling in several locations. Map 2A depicts the vehicles that have ran off the road in summer and winter conditions. One resident flipped their car when they ran off the road due to the soft shoulders.



Photo point 7, see Map 2

Paved shoulders make the road safer, allow an area that is more useful for temporary maintenance of vehicles, provide increased opportunities for faster vehicles to pass slow-moving vehicles, offer safer opportunities for pedestrian travel, and allow easier and safer travel for the increased numbers of bicyclists touring the town. Cooper will have an increased need for paved shoulders as the community grows and as traffic on these regional collector roads increases. Indeed, respondents to the survey were very much in favor of adding or including shoulders in future re-paving projects.

**BRIDGES**

Cooper has two bridges for which the State is responsible. The bridges in town are in good condition. Many culverts, on the other hand, are in very poor condition and on Route 191 result in significant frost heave action for long stretches of road from February to April. During this time every year State maintenance personnel fill in hollows with sand before the frost is out of the ground. Cold patch is then use to fill the longitudinal cracks that can be as deep as 6-8 inches.

<b>Bridge Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Capital Responsibility/</b>	<b>Feature Under</b>
--------------------	-----------------	--------------------------------	----------------------

		<b>Maintenance Responsibility</b>	
Leland	North Union	State	Leland Stream
Dead Stream	Route 191	State	Dead Stream

The town’s road commissioners (Selectmen) are responsible for inspecting, maintaining the town’s culverts/bridges and inspecting its roadways.

**PARKING FACILITIES**

There are no parking structures in town. Present parking needs are met by existing on-street parking along roadways and within driveways. The Cathance Grange has a parking lot but there are no municipal lots. At current rates of growth, it is anticipated that current parking facilities will meet town needs for the next ten-year period.

There is a small parking lot (~6 vehicles) at Town Beach. There is more parking along the road leading to the beach. Additional parking is needed and could be provided at the beach access and through brush removal and the addition of gravel along the access road.

**PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES**

Presently, there are no sidewalks in Cooper and none are needed in the near future. However the addition of shoulders as noted several times above would significantly improve pedestrian safety along Route 191.

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES – see Chapter L – Regional Coordination**

**PUBLIC SURVEY**

In the Public Opinion Survey there are several questions that relate to local roads and transportation. Respondents are generally satisfied with summer road conditions though they are less satisfied with winter road conditions. Opinions on investments for road improvements were varied. Adding shoulders was strongly supported as were improvements for stormwater run-off from town roads into Cooper Lakes. Again, while discontinuance of winter maintenance on unpaved road was supported (first as a study and secondarily as an action) there was also a fair amount of strong disagreement on this option.

Support for coordination among towns to seek ways to improve Route 191 was significant. Participation in a regional airport authority was polarized with many expressing no opinion perhaps because they did not understand what it means for the town.

**SUMMARY**

The transportation linkages in Cooper consist primarily of State Route 191. Our town is reliant on its road network as the primary means of transportation movement. Overall, the public roadways in Cooper are in poor to fair condition. Route 191, the main travel way is in very poor condition. The shoulders are unpaved and very soft, the ditches are deep and the edge of road surface is crumbling in several locations. Route 191 serves as the primary arterial between the two most populated centers of the county, Machias and Calais, and between the international border and coastal Washington County. The volume of heavy truck traffic is enormous and it is traversing a road that was never designed or constructed to accommodate their volume or their weight. The result is unsafe conditions particularly at night and in severe weather.

The road surface has deteriorated (multiple longitudinal cracks, eroding shoulders and road surface) and is nearly impossible to maintain in winter weather because of extensive longitudinal tire ruts that create an undulating road profile from shoulder to shoulder. A very short stretch of Route 191 on Cooper Hill was reconstructed (with 4 foot shoulders) in the summer of 2010 and a significantly longer area was only resurfaced (no shoulders). Many of the portions that were resurfaced will return very quickly to their previous condition with the weight of trucks and winter weather.

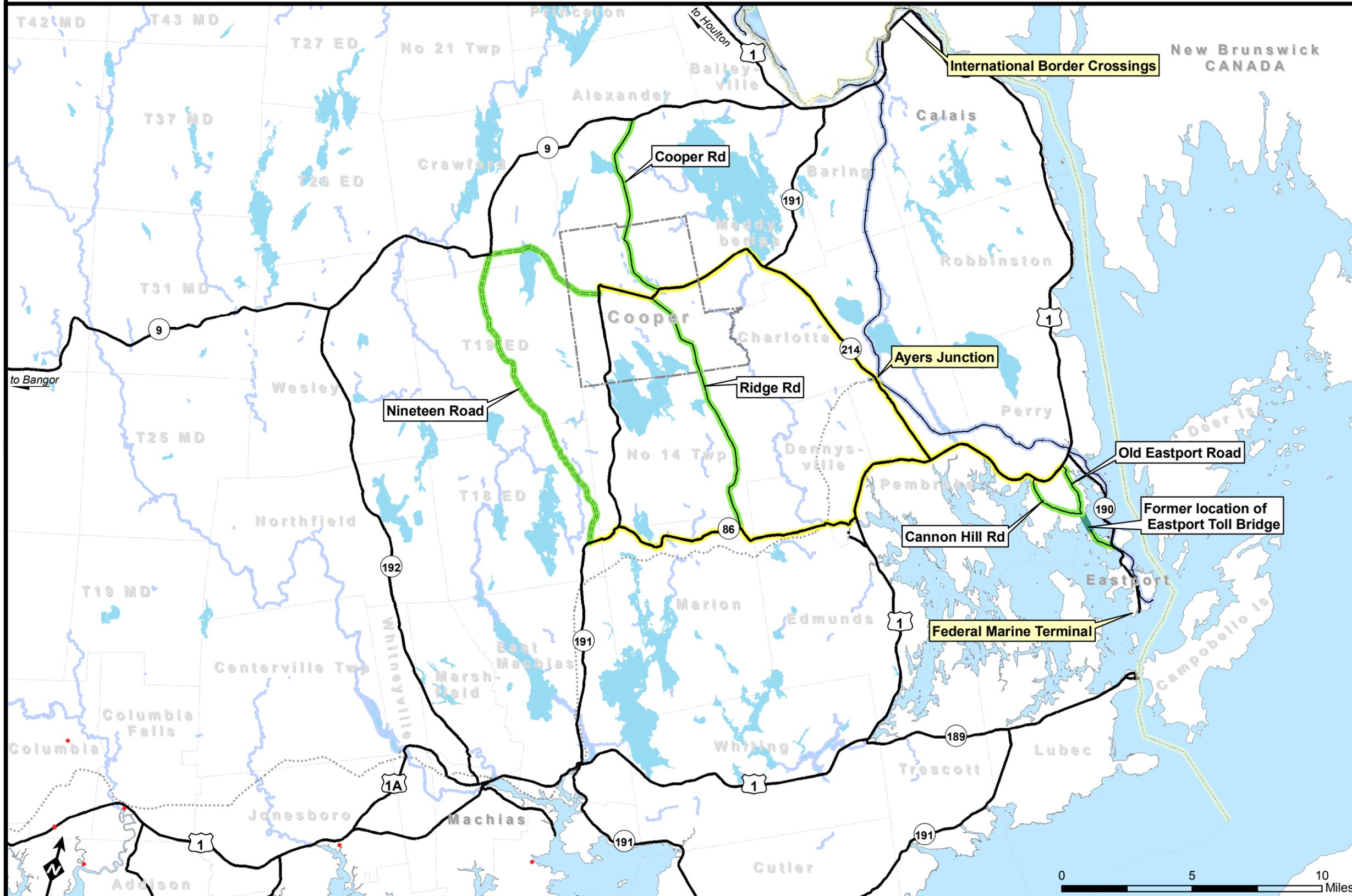
Information from the state which classifies roads as town owned or private is antiquated. Research is necessary to clarify actual road status. Town Source material has not been accessible. Since town records have been, and will continue to be transferred to a new, accessible location, we will be able to adequately conduct our research, and will update our data.

Since MDOT has jurisdiction over most main roads and one bridge within Cooper, the town will continue to communicate and cooperate with the department. The town requires all new roads to be constructed to specific municipal standards.

# Town of Cooper Comprehensive Plan

Washington County, Maine

## MAP 8 Regional Transportation



Data Sources:  
Maine Office of GIS  
Garmin GPS Receiver  
Universal Transverse  
Mercator- Zone 19N  
North American Datum- 1983

----- International Boundary  
—— State Roads

### Alternative Truck Routes

— Existing local roads  
— Proposed bridge  
— Existing State Roads

### Rail Corridors

— Not actively management  
..... Managed as Sunrise Trail

## H. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

This section reviews the current public facilities and services of the Town of Cooper to determine if they meet our needs today and if they have the capacity to serve our town for the next ten years. The goal of this section is to plan, finance, and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services that will accommodate the town's future needs.

As Cooper is a small town with few services the recreation and open space resources are also included in this chapter. Our open space includes farms, heaths, forestlands, wetlands, lakeshores, and river corridors, as described in the natural resources section of this plan. Much open space is not accessible to the public and as the regional population rises, development pressures on all open space will increase. Accessible open space including snowmobile trails, and surface waters are outlined in this section. The goal of the recreation section is to promote and protect the availability of recreational opportunities including access to surface waters.

### GENERAL MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

Cooper is part of State Senate District 29, State House District 30, and U.S. Congressional District 2. The town has a selectmen/town meeting form of government with a part time (evenings and week-ends) town clerk responsible for town records maintenance. The three-member board of selectmen serves one-year terms and typically meet on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. The town's fiscal year ends on February 29<sup>th</sup> and approval for the budget is achieved a annual town meeting on the last Monday in March. The school budget is put before voters at a special town meeting in June or July.

### BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Cooper has a variety of elected and appointed positions by the Selectmen. They include:

<b>Elected</b>	<b>Membership/Term</b>	<b>Appointed</b>	<b>Membership/Term</b>
Board of Selectmen	3 members/1 year	Planning Board	5-7 members
Board of Assessors	3 members/1 year	Comprehensive Plan Committee	Ad hoc (volunteer)
Road Commissioner	one year	Animal Control Officer	One year term
School Board	3 members/3 years	Code Enforcement Officer	One year term
Town Clerk/Tax Collector/Treasurer	One year	Sextant of Cemetery	One year
Overseers of the Poor	One year	Emergency Management Director	One year term
Board of Appeals (Selectmen)	3 members/1 year	Election Officials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election Clerk</li> <li>• Election Clerk, alt.</li> <li>• Democratic Election Clerk</li> <li>• Democratic Election Clerk, alt.</li> <li>• Republican Election Clerk</li> <li>• Republican Election Clerk, alt.</li> </ul>	Two year term
Constable	One year term	Health Officer	One year term
Registrar of Voters	Two year term	Plumbing Inspector	One year term

The planning board meets as needed. Meetings are held to review development proposals, shoreland zoning and wetland's issues for compliance with state and local regulations.

**MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS/FACILITIES**

The town of Cooper does not own any municipal building but is in negotiation with the Trustees or the Cathance Grange for its purchase. Between the years of 2008-2010 Cooper cooperated with the adjoining town of Alexander to construct a municipal records storage addition to the Alexander Municipal Building. The storage area is climate controlled and fire proof. Records from Cooper were moved into the facility in the Spring of 2010.

The town owns an acre parcel of land containing a capped landfill and the town beach (75 feet of frontage on Cathance Lake and less than an acre of land).

**MUNICIPAL SERVICES****Town Clerk**

The town clerk is responsible for administering the town's routine business and reports to the selectmen. The town clerk also currently serves as the registrar of voters. A certified code enforcement officer is contracted. There is one road commissioner. Town office hours are provided from the home of the Town Clerk on evenings and week-ends. An answering machine is checked regularly.

**Highway Department and Solid Waste Management**

Cooper contracts for winter road maintenance.

There are no landfills or waste transfer facilities within Cooper. Residents take their trash to the transfer station/recycling facility in Marion. The town has no recycling facility; recycling facilities are available in Marion.

Cooper pays ~\$6500 per year to the Marion Transfer Station based on tonnage and a per person estimate of the proportionate population from contributing towns. Costs for solid waste removal and hauling are rising. Each of Maine's municipalities has to submit an annual report of its solid waste management practices. The state's objective is for each municipality to recycle at least 50 percent of its household waste. If the quota is not attained, a fee is imposed, unless the municipality indicates good faith in attempting to improve its recycling rate. Developing a reasonable progress plan agreeable both to Maine Solid Waste Agency and the municipality does this. Many communities did not achieve the state planning office's (SPO) 1998 deadline for achieving 50 percent recycling. Recycling rate data for Cooper is included in the Marion Transfer Station region. The 2002 municipal recycling rate for this region was 15.6% with a trend rate of "variable". Recycling should be actively promoted in our community and region. The town of Cooper is investigating providing additional recycling opportunities within the town.

**Water Supply**

The town has no public water systems. All residents and businesses depend upon their own on-site dug or drilled wells, springs and lake water for all water needs. Iron levels are high in surface and groundwater in the town. These sources have adequately met our needs and are projected to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The utmost care must be taken to

prevent pollution of these sources. Areas should be designated where public water supply of good quality could be obtained in future years, and care must be taken not to pollute these water resources. Wetlands protect our water supplies. Throughout Washington County, the natural occurrence of arsenic in bedrock necessitates regular testing of wells for this and other contaminants.

**Septic Systems**

The town does not have a municipal sewerage system. Disposal is by on-site wastewater systems (septic tanks and leach fields). Nearly all residents and business depend upon private septic systems. Because of our dependence upon wells and springs for drinking water, it is crucial to install, upgrade where necessary, and maintain adequate septic/sewage disposal systems. Referring to the town's soils suitability maps before installing any system can help prevent the possibility of pollution. The minimum standards for the installation of septic disposal systems established by the State of Maine must be observed. Lots with no public water supply or public sewage disposal systems must meet the State minimum of 20,000 square feet.

**Stormwater Management System**

Cooper's stormwater system consists of roadside ditches and culverts.

**Police Protection**

Cooper elects a constable each year. The town also receives police protection from Washington County Sheriff's Office and the Maine State Police. The Washington County Sheriffs Department provides the dispatching services for police services.

**Fire Protection**

Cooper has a Class 10 volunteer Fire Department with 6 volunteers. The town has a mutual aid agreement with the towns of Alexander, Baileyville, Calais, Wesley, Baring, Princeton, Meddybemps, and Crawford. Dispatch for Fire services is provided by the Calais Fire Department. The Maine Forest Service also responds to brush fires and any structures at risk near forest and brush fires. The Cooper Volunteer Fire Department owns the following equipment (year, make, model, pumping capacity).

- 1977 Ford F-700 engine that has 750 gallon tank and pumps 250 gallons per minute

Cooper has two dry fire hydrants one on Cathance Lake at Birch Point and the other is on North Union Road at a private pond. The hydrant at Birch Point is equipped with an 8 inch pipe and is not therefore set up for the engines in this region that mostly have 6 inch pipes. Fire Chief Dave Timpe notes that they could add an adapter but the size and length of the pipe is oversized for the engine and water fill up is very slow. Instead the trucks fill up from streams as the hose is equipped with a screen. The truck is equipped with an auger for winter but the streams are sometimes frozen to the bottom. The town could therefore use other dry hydrants in the following locations:

1. On Cathance Lake at the public boat landing (in Cathance Township, formerly TWP 14).
2. Chub Cove on Cathance
3. Dead Stream near North Union and Route 191

In the event that the town secures ownership of the Cathance Grange, a Fire Station is desired in the same location.

**Emergency Services**

Cooper receives first responder volunteer ambulance service by the Alexander Fire Department. Downeast EMS provides full ambulance transportation to area hospitals. As with Fire service dispatch is provided by the Calais Fire Department.

**Enhanced 9-1-1**

The Emergency Services Communication Bureau has assisted Cooper in the physical addressing of all properties. Cooper fully participates in the enhanced 911 program. E-911 service automatically displays a caller's address on a computer screen at a public safety answering point (PSAP) and the caller's number can automatically be redialed if the line is disconnected.

**Cemeteries**

Cemeteries are a cultural resource providing insight into the history of the community. Cooper has six cemeteries one of which is located on private property. They are all shown on Map 2. There are numerous private family plots scattered throughout the town. The public cemeteries are insufficient to meet the needs of the community. The town is examining the options for expansion including purchase of additional lands adjacent to existing cemeteries.

**MAIL DELIVERY**

There is no Post Office in Cooper; the Meddybemps Post Office serves our town. Some residents have a post office box, a central collection post office box but most of the mail is delivered through a rural carrier for home delivery.

**RECREATION**

The vast natural resources of Cooper and the surrounding region provide numerous recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. With one large (Cathance) and one small lake (Vining), a Class A river (Dennys), and extensive forest lands, Cooper has always been a haven for hunters, fishermen and outdoor enthusiasts. The Town has limited municipal recreational facilities primarily located at the town beach on Cathance Lake.

**Recreation Programs**

Cooper does not have a Recreation Committee. Most residents now drive to larger celebrations in the region. The Cathance Grange organizes hunters' breakfast in the fall for residents and visitors, and the facility is used by the Cathance Lake Association and town committees for meetings as well as by residents for some social gatherings.

**Local Recreational Facilities**

The Maine Department of Conservation has published guidelines for the types of recreational facilities that municipalities should seek to develop and maintain. These guidelines are based upon a town's population. In the table below these guidelines and the facilities and services found locally are shown, as well as the condition and brief description of those facilities.

<b>Guidelines for Recreation and Park Services for Municipalities with Populations under 1,000</b>	<b>Located In Cooper?</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Description/Location/Capacity</b>
<u>I. Administration</u> Recreation and Park Committee or Board	No	-	
<u>II. Leadership</u> Summer Program: Swimming Instructors	No	-	Some residents patronize the swimming instruction available at the municipal pool in Calais.
<u>III. Program</u> Swimming Instruction	No	-	
Community-wide Special Events	Yes	-	Hunters breakfasts; snowmobile and other trail rides, Lake Association pancake breakfast
<u>IV. Facilities</u> <u>Outdoor Facilities</u> Community Recreation Area, 12-25 acres w/ball fields, tennis courts, swimming, ice skating, etc.	No	-	
Softball Diamond (0.75 per 1,000 pop.)	No	-	
Basketball Court (0.50 per 1,000 pop.)	No	-	
Ice Skating (5,000 s.f. per 1,000 pop.)	Yes	-	On frozen lakes
Playgrounds (0.50 per 1,000 pop.)	No	-	
Picnic Areas w/tables & grills (2 tables per 1,000 pop.)	Yes	-	Town Beach
<u>Indoor Facilities</u> School Facilities Available for Public Use	No	-	
Gym or Large Multi-Purpose Room (0.20 per 1,000 pop.)	No	-	
Auditorium or Assembly Hall	Yes	D	Cathance Grange (non-winter use only)
Public Library	No	-	Some limited mobile book access.
<u>V. Finance</u> (funds for operation and maintenance - not capital) Minimum \$6 per capita	Yes	-	Town Beach maintenance; donation to Calais Children's Library; state refund from snowmobile registrations goes entirely to snowmobile trail club

## Condition Classification System:

## Grade Classification

- A Relatively new facility, lifetime expected in excess of 20 years (with proper maintenance)
- B Facility is older and has been well cared for, lifetime expected to be in excess of 10 years
- C Older facility that may not be in the best of shape and may need minor improvements within 5 years
- D Old facility that needs considerable maintenance within 2 years and/or significant renovation
- F Very old facility that has outlived its usefulness or is in severe disrepair. This facility (or equipment) is unsafe or unusable and should be attended to very soon. Replacement may or may not be necessary (based on need assessment).

**Regional Recreation**

Recreational resources in Washington County have an impact on the local and regional economy. Tourist-related businesses that rely on the recreational opportunities are significant sources of income to many towns in the area. In Cooper, some businesses benefit in part from an influx of tourists and second home owners to the region, especially during the summer.

Regional recreation facilities accessible to Cooper's residents and to visitors include wildlife refuges, parks, golf courses, picnic areas, public access to surface waters, and hiking and snowmobile trails. Major regional recreational resources include:

1. Cobscook Bay State Park in Edmunds: 888 acres; more than 100 - campsites and shelters are on the water's edge; boating; hot showers; picnic area; hiking and groomed cross-country ski trails, hiking trails.
2. Cobscook Trails: Local network of hiking trails.
3. Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land, Bold Coast Trails: maintained by the State, contains ten miles of hiking trails and three walk-in campsites.
4. Devil's Head, Calais; hiking, overlooks of St. Croix River and St. Croix Island.
5. Downeast Sunrise Trail: multi-use recreational trail on former Calais Branch rail corridor
6. Edmunds boat landing.
7. East Plummer Island Preserve and the Mistake Island Preserve in Jonesport, both managed by the Nature Conservancy.
8. East Quoddy Lighthouse and Mulholland Lighthouse in Campobello, N.B.
9. Gleason's Cove Town Park in Perry: picnic sites, beach, fishing weirs, boat launch.
10. Great Cove Golf Course in Roque Bluffs: 9-holes, 1,700 yards long.
11. Great Wass Island Preserve in Beals: 1540 acres of boreal forest, peat bogs, and coastline managed by the Nature Conservancy.
12. Herring Cove Provincial Park, Campobello, NB: golf, campground, playground, beach, trails.
13. Jonesboro Wildlife Management Area: 726 acres.
14. Jasper Beach in Buck's Harbor, Machiasport.
15. Lubec Municipal Marina.
16. Machias Seal Island, seabird nesting site with puffin colony, boat tours from Cutler, Jonesport and New Brunswick.
17. Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge: 16,000 acres west of Calais, 6,700 acres in Edmunds. Migratory birds, big game and 50 miles of trails.
18. Patrick's Lake, Marion: picnicing, swimming, canoeing, fishing, small boating
19. Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge in Steuben: 3,335 acres on the mainland with hiking trails, several islands, and a variety of birds
20. Quoddy Head State Park in Lubec: 532 acres, easternmost point in the U.S., high rocky cliffs with extensive walking trails and views of Canada. The park features 4.5 miles of hiking trails, extensive forests, two bogs, diverse habitat for rare plants, and the red-and-white striped lighthouse tower of West Quoddy Head Light.
21. Reversing Falls Town Park in Pembroke: 140 acres, trails and picnic area.
22. Rocky Lake unit of the Bureau of Public Lands: canoeing, camping, fishing, bike riding, trails
23. Robbinston Boat Landing and Picnic area.
24. Roque Bluffs State Park: 2300-foot beach, picnic tables, grills, trails and playground.
25. Roosevelt-Campobello International Park in Campobello, N.B. A 2,800-acre park that includes the cottage and the grounds where Franklin Roosevelt and his family vacationed, as well as a large natural area with many nature trails and look-out points. The Island also has a Provincial tourist information center.
26. Shackford Head State Park in Eastport. A 90-acre undeveloped peninsula with protected coves, a bold headland, and hiking trails.

27. St. Croix Country Club and Golf Course in Calais.
28. St. Croix Island International Historic Site at Red Beach in Calais. Overlooks St. Croix Island, site of historic French settlement in 1604.
29. Coastal, river and nature tours are available by kayak, canoe, and motor vessels in nearby towns.

### Snowmobile/ATV Trails

Cooper has 25-30 miles of snowmobile and ATV trails that are maintained by a private club, supported by the town and used actively by residents and tourists. These trails are now connected to the Downeast Sunrise Trail which will be an 88-mile route when completed connecting Cooper to downtown Machias and multiple other towns including Cherryfield, Harrington, Columbia Falls and others.

### PUBLIC ACCESS TO SURFACE WATER

Within the town there are two lakes only one of which, Cathance Lake, has public access. Cathance Lake is available for fishing, boating, swimming, and ice-skating. There are improved boat-landing facilities in neighboring Cathance Township (formerly Twp 14).

A state-owned boat launch, located in Cathance Township, provides excellent access to Cathance Lake. The town beach access to Cathance Lake in Cooper has a shallow draft that provides carry in boat access only.

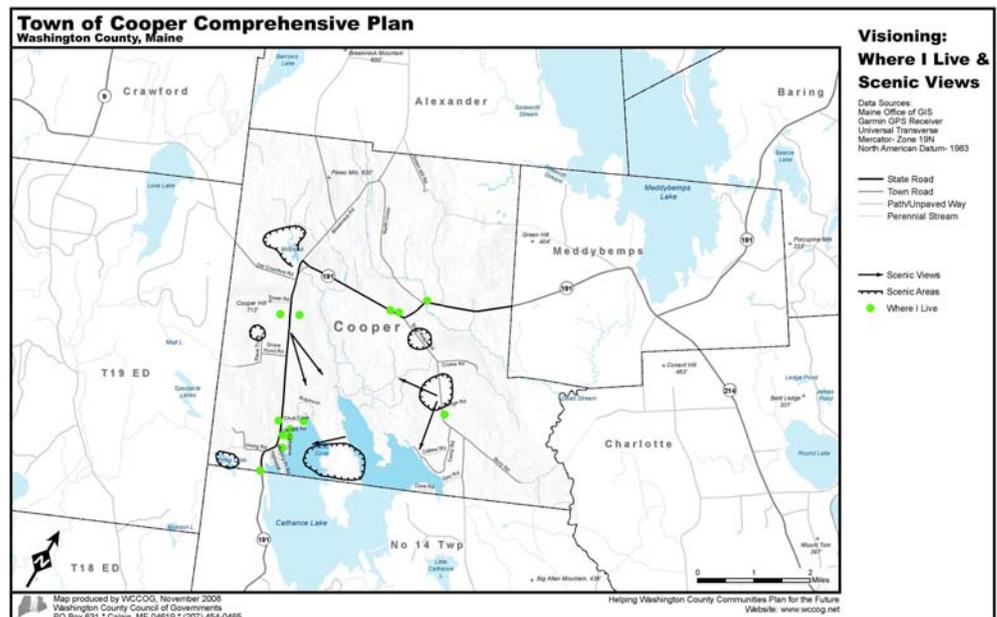
Opinions on expanding the facilities at Cathance Lake were very polarized (see Chapter – Survey Results). The strongest support exists for expanded picnic and garbage facilities.

There are limited opportunities for public access on Vining Lake. Access has occurred over Vining Road but with recent potential subdivision activity, it is in jeopardy.

### SCENIC AREAS

There are several areas of particularly scenic value to the town many of which were noted in the community visioning session and the public survey. They include:

1. Mill Pond from Route 191
2. Vining Lake
3. Cathance Lake from Route 191
4. Cathance Lake from Hogs Neck
5. Blueberry barrens, Cooper Hill and Cathance Lake from East Ridge Road
6. Open land, blueberry barrens, the west ridge, Rocky Lake at end of Race Track Road



**Land Use Options to Preserve Open Space**

Open space is an important part of recreational assets of a community. In some cases the advantage is that the land is particularly scenic, or used for recreation and access. A number of options can be used to protect open space, including government purchase of private land, donation, non-profit ownership, voluntary deed restrictions including conservation easements, or regulations like zoning and subdivision ordinances that seek to reserve open areas in new developments. In addition, the Tree Growth Tax Law program, and Farm Land and Open Space Tax Law can serve to protect open space. In 2007, Cooper had 30 parcels totaling 8,554 acres in tree growth tax status and 2 parcels totaling 607 acres enrolled in farmland and open space tax status.

There are no provisions for open space or cluster development in Cooper's regulatory framework yet incentives or requirements for preservation are found in the ordinances of other towns. Certain unimproved land is seen as a shared resource, e.g. for hunting, and though privately owned, can be used by the residents. As more and more residents restrict the use of their land, traditional use of land for hunting and other outdoor access (hiking, snowmobiling, skiing etc.) is lost along with a way of life. Many new landowners are receptive to a continuance of these forms of access as long as they are asked beforehand. The conservation easement on 9,995 acres of forestland by the Downeast Lakes Land Trust and the New England Forest Foundation (in Cooper – see Map 2, and in Alexander, Crawford) has affirmative provisions that will allow public access in these traditional ways into the future.

**EDUCATION**

The town of Cooper is a member of School Union 106 which also includes the towns of Alexander, Robbinston, Baring, and Crawford and the city of Calais. The city and each town have elected school committees that oversee school affairs.

Grades K-8 have the option to attend the Alexander Elementary School, Woodland Elementary, Rose Gaffney in Machias, or to the Elm St Elementary in East Machias. Transportation however is only provided to those attending Alexander or Woodland. High school students may attend any of the regional high schools (Calais, Shead, Washington Academy, Woodland, Machias Memorial) but bussing is provided only to Woodland.

**ALEXANDER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.** Built in 1986, with a new addition completed in 1993, the facility has a capacity of 150 students and features classrooms for Grades K through 8, speech, gifted, library, art, music, computer, offices and a cafeteria/gymnasium combination. Enrollment in 1999 was 64 and it has declined slightly to 53 in 2004.

**CALAIS HIGH SCHOOL.** Completed in 1977, the high school has a 500 student capacity, and was remodeled in 2004. The High School is a fully redesigned school with state of the art technology infrastructure, new chemistry and physics labs, a full range of classes from applied core strategies to advanced placement. The facility also has a combined cafeteria and auditorium with stage for drama and fine arts productions and a gymnasium and separate weights and wrestling area.

In 1989, the Calais Regional Vocational Center was opened in the High School building serving students from the Shead (Eastport), Woodland, and Calais high schools. The facilities are in excellent condition. The vocational center has a complete range of classrooms, shops, gymnasium, computer lab, ATM lab and wireless capability.

WASHINGTON ACADEMY. Originally constructed in 1823 Washington Academy is located in East Machias and now composed of seven buildings on a 45 acre campus. It is a private school that hosts students from the region and beyond (including international) who attend daily or as boarders living on campus. It includes many classrooms, computer labs, performing arts stage, a cafeteria, library, gym complex music classrooms, and an Industrial Technology Building that contains the Marine Trades Program, Industrial Arts, and Computer Networking and Repair.

WOODLAND JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL. Constructed in 1955, with additions in 1965 (gymnasium) and 1972 (junior high), the Woodland Junior/Senior High School has a student capacity of approximately 350 and current enrollment is 261 for grades 7-12.

The facilities are in good condition and contain a full range of classrooms, including two portables (one of which accommodates band instruction/instruments), pre-vocational shops, art room, gymnasium/cafeteria, weight room, ITV/ATM long distance learning facilities and full-service library as well as computer, chemistry and biology labs.

More information on schools, with town enrollments for the past five years, is found in the population section of this comprehensive plan.

### **Higher Education**

The Washington County Vocational Institute was established in 1969 and became the WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE in 2003. The Calais campus is situated on 400 acres of land overlooking the St. Croix River. Washington County Community College is one of seven institutions in the Maine Community College System. Thirty-six of WCCC's 38 catalog programs are located in Calais, training students for employment in several diverse occupations - from construction and mechanical trades to food service and business studies. Several of these programs articulate into degree programs at other colleges and Universities. The College has the capacity for 500 full-time students, while the Continuing Education Division serves an additional 400 part-time students at sites throughout Washington County. Enrollment in 2005 was 454 students.

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT MACHIAS (UMM). <http://www.umm.maine.edu> This 1,000 student branch of the University of Maine System is less than an hour from Cooper, and offers Bachelor and Associate degrees in a wide range of subjects including business education and administration, recreation management, biology, environmental studies, English, and history. Many of its students are "non-traditional" (older persons returning for their degrees). The University is linked to all the other branches of the system by inter-active TV. Associate degrees in Science, Business Administration, Liberal Arts, and other subjects may be earned without entering a "traditional" university classroom. ITV is funded by a grant and administered through the University of Maine in Augusta.

The University of Maine system also offers a wide range of daytime and evening classes at its Calais Center, located at the Unobskey School on Main Street downtown. Enrollment at the center varies from semester to semester. Approximately 120 students are currently enrolled at the Calais Center.

## **HEALTH CARE**

CALAIS REGIONAL HOSPITAL, <http://www.calaishospital.com>, serves a population of approximately 14,000 from Topsfield to the North, Wesley to the West and Eastport to the south. CRH is the largest employer in Calais, employing close to 250 people. Calais Regional is licensed by the State of Maine as a Critical Access Hospital and as such is licensed for 15 acute care beds and 10 swings beds and has a 24-hour *physician* staffed emergency department. Services offered at the Hospital include clinics in cardiology; ophthalmology; prosthetics-orthotics; blood pressure; and wound care. A variety of support groups are available for individuals and family members dealing with diabetes, cardiovascular disease and breast cancer. Out-patient services include laboratory procedures, physical therapy, occupational therapy, aquatic therapy, osteoporosis management and prevention, radiology, including fixed unit CT scan, mobile MRI and nuclear medicine, bone density testing, ultrasound exams and mammography, chemotherapy, day surgery, cardiac/pulmonary rehabilitation, nutritional counseling, home health care, and respiratory care procedures. A multi-specialty courtesy staff of 30 physicians and a variety of allied medical specialists compliment the 15 members of the Hospital's active medical staff. CRH will begin construction of a replacement facility in 2005 and plans to welcome its first patient into the new facility by the summer of 2006.

ATLANTIC REHAB is a privately owned, 60 bed nursing and rehabilitation facility licensed by the State of Maine, located across the street from the Calais Regional Hospital. The nursing home offers an intermediate level of long term care including medical coverage, nursing and personal care, social services, and individual activity programs. Atlantic Rehab provides a home-like atmosphere for people who require nursing care.

WASHINGTON PLACE, an assisted living facility with 30 beds, opened in 2000. It is located next door to Atlantic Rehab and is close to the Calais Regional Hospital, doctors' offices and the nursing home. Washington Place provides care givers for the residents 24 hours a day, an LPN (licensed practical nurse) is on staff at all times and there is also an activity director on staff. Washington Place is licensed by the State of Maine and under First Atlantic Health Care.

WASHINGTON COUNTY PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATES provides behavioral health services in Washington, Hancock and Penobscot Counties including crisis services, in-home counseling, outpatient counseling, geriatric assessment and consultation, children's crisis residential services and children's residential treatment services. WCPA operates the Calais Children's Project in a building owned by the city of Calais. The Calais Children's Project provides three different residential treatment environments and specialized care of children with a variety of behavioral problems.

SUNRISE OPPORTUNITIES, operates a 10-unit supervised living facility for mentally handicapped individuals. They also operate the Beckett Center, a facility that provides

employment activities for the mentally handicapped.

DOWNEAST HEALTH SERVICES is a local, non-profit agency that serves families in Hancock and Washington County. The major programs include the Women, Infants and Children nutritional program (WIC), Family Planning, the Preventive Health Program (PHP), a maternal and child health nursing home visit program (MCH), and a social service program for pregnant and parenting adolescents (SSA). Approximately 370 different clients are served in the Calais clinic each year.

The EASTERN AGENCY ON AGING (EAA) makes it possible for persons 60 and older to remain in their home longer and more comfortably. To meet that goal, the Agency provides a variety of services that are available to area residents. Through a contract with Washington/Hancock Community Agency, EAA provides transportation in Calais and the vicinity. Many senior citizens rely on this service for transportation to medical appointments.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND COUNSELING SERVICES (CHCS) provides a variety of physical and mental health services in area communities. The Calais branch offers counseling for individuals, couples and families, and information and education to the general public about mental health issues. All counselors are legally qualified to be practicing through licensure, registration, or certification. Workshops and courses that address many topics are provided by CHCS.

SUNRISE COUNTY HOMECARE SERVICES has offices in Machias, Lubec and Calais. They provide and coordinate home care services such as visiting nurses; home health aides; physical, occupational and speech therapy; senior companions; homecare telemedicine, medical social work; and homemaker services.

The DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES administers several programs to assist low income residents in the area. Recipients of services provided by this department must meet low income guidelines to qualify for the following programs:  
AFDC, food stamps, Medicaid.

DOWNEAST COMMUNITY HOSPITAL, <http://www.dech.org> DECH, is located in Machias 25 miles to the south of Cooper. It is a 25-bed 24-hour critical access facility and has an active medical staff of 25 practitioners.

MAINE VETERANS HOME. Completed in 2005, this facility is attached to the Downeast Community Hospital and provides 30 beds for veterans, and spouses if space is available, needing assisted living facilities for dementia.

EASTERN MAINE MEDICAL CENTER, <http://www.emh.org>, is a 411 bed facility and one of only three trauma centers in the state. It is located in Bangor, ninety miles away. Their 300 physicians provide primary care hospital services, as well as specialty and intensive services. There are other medical facilities available in Bangor, including St. Joseph's Hospital.

AMBULANCE SERVICE. Emergency ambulance service is provided 24 hours a day by the regional ambulance service provided by Washington County Emergency Medical Service

Authority (WCEMSA). The operation is fully licensed and provides care at the level of EMT, intermediate and Paramedic. The full time manning and advanced level is necessary to meet the demands of the growing elderly population and the distance to hospitals. WCEMSA is a regional emergency ambulance service covering 19 communities in three counties. The service runs between 1,750 and 2,000 calls per year. The service provides both emergency and transfer services, operating out of three full-time base stations plus relationships with two volunteer operations and first response units based in Alexander and Charlotte.

Extreme trauma cases are handled in the community through a working relationship between “Life Flight of Maine”, Calais Regional Hospital, and the ambulance service.

DIALYSIS CENTER. Fresenius Medical Care opened a dialysis center in 2003 on the site of the former Gates Fiber Extrusion plant in Eastport. Formerly patients in the area had to make the trip back and forth to Bangor up to four times a week. Making this level of care available on the local level is a huge step for the dialysis patients in the region.

DISCOVERY HOUSE. Opened in 2005, Discovery House (<http://www.discoveryhouse.com>) provides an out-patient center for substance abuse on Beech Street in Calais and serves 300 clients. Its mission is to provide comprehensive services for persons affected by addiction-through community awareness, quality and holistic clinical services-in an efficient, safe and fiscally sound environment.

SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM. Run by University of Maine Cooperative Extension: Volunteer seniors provide services to home-bound seniors, i.e. home visits, transportation to doctor’s appointments, shopping, community events, visits to friends and nursing home residents.

CATHANCE LAKE ASSOCIATION. Works with biologist to monitor water quality/invasive plants and animals, conducts boat inspections at the public boat ramp during the summer (July and August) to prevent contamination of the lake by invasive species.

### **CULTURE/COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Community events take place in the Cathance Grange Hall. Library services are available through the Calais library and books by mail through the Maine State Library system.

The Cathance Lake Association which hosts an annual meeting that is open to members only with information on ways and means of protecting the water quality of the lake.

### **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICES**

There are no churches in Cooper.

There is a Cooper Grange Association that uses the Cathance Grange building and provides support to a number of charitable causes, and scholarships as funds allow.

Other organizations include participation in the Breakneck Mountain Snowmobile Club and the Breakneck Mountain ATV Club. Most residents participate in community organizations associated with the school where their children attend classes.

**PUBLIC UTILITIES AND SERVICES**

**Electrical Service:** Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative (no three phase power available in Cooper)

**Telephone Service:** Fairpoint Communications, cellular telephone services

**Television, Cable, and Radio**

- WLBZ - Channel 2 (NBC affiliate) Bangor
- WABI - Channel 5 (CBS affiliate) Bangor
- WVII - Channel 7 (ABC affiliate) Bangor
- Maine PBS- Channel 13 (PBS affiliate) Calais
- WQDY (92.7 FM) Calais simulcast with WALZ (95.3) Machias
- WCRQ (102.9) Calais
  
- WMED (89.7 FM) (NPR affiliate) Calais

**Newspapers**

- Bangor Daily News (daily)
- Calais Advertiser (weekly)
- Downeast Coastal Press (weekly)
- Ellsworth American (weekly)
- Machias Valley Observer (weekly)
- Quoddy Tides (twice-monthly)
- Eastport
- Saint Croix Courier (published in St.

**Internet Providers:** There are a number of Internet service providers with local access numbers. There is minimal high-speed (broadband) service in the Cooper area. However one provider, Axiom Technologies, in Machias is installing facilities in the region for wireless service with the support of a ConnectME grant and their own financing.

**Public Survey**

In the 2009 Town Survey, a set of survey questions sought to understand how much taxpayers are prepared to spend or invest in their preservation priorities and in community services.

Respondents were asked how much they favored/disfavored investment in each item and then to choose 3 of their highest priorities. See Chapter L - Town Survey for charts of responses. In summary the two highest priorities to respondents (13 votes each) were restoration/renovation of the Cathance Grange and constructing a new town office/community building. The next highest priority for town investments (11 votes) was to discontinue winter maintenance of all unpaved town roads. The next two highest priorities (10 votes each) for town investments were hiking/walking trails and road improvement for stormwater run-off from Town roads into Cooper Lakes. Closely following (8 votes each) were scenic view protection, a study of unpaved roads for discontinuance of winter maintenance, expanding town funded school bus service to more regional schools and purchase of public access to surface waters.

Respondents were generally satisfied with town and regional/community services or had no opinion about them. Respondents are also generally satisfied with other services while many are dissatisfied with the availability of high speed (broadband) internet access. Finally, respondents are generally satisfied with summer road conditions though they are less satisfied with winter road conditions. The condition of the cemeteries was found satisfactory by most as was the recycling center/landfill/transfer station though there were some who are strongly dissatisfied

with it. Additional written comments are also included in Appendix A. Most are satisfied with the property tax level though there were many who were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied.

**SUMMARY**

Through proper maintenance and investment, Cooper's public facilities and services have remained in good condition overall. However Route 191 is in serious disrepair because it was never fully constructed for the truck and vehicle traffic that it receives. More discussion on this issue is provided in the Transportation chapter.

Cooper has many recreational opportunities because of the vast natural resources of the Town and the region, and a few municipal recreational facilities. Some of the Town's most important recreational resources rely on waterfront access, which we should seek to maintain and improve. Scenic view protection is particularly important to Cooper residents.

Although the town has not previously established a formal Capital Improvement Plan, reserve accounts have been used for many necessary items and a CIP is proposed in this Comprehensive Plan.

## **I. FISCAL CAPACITY**

In order to maintain a consistent mil rate year to year, town government must operate in a manner that is fiscally responsible. Large fluctuations in the tax rate can cause public concern and can also discourage economic development. Although the priorities of the town may change from one year to another, stable municipal finances are always a fundamental responsibility of town government. It is important for Cooper to handle diligently all yearly expenditures while at the same time planning for the town's long-term objectives. As is the case with any business, the physical assets of Cooper must be properly maintained through capital reserve accounts to protect the town's continued economic health.

The goal of this section, as with the Public Facilities section, is to plan for, finance, and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development, without placing an enormous burden on the town's taxpayers.

The majority of the financial information for this section was taken from town reports.

## **VALUATIONS**

The town's primary revenue source is through the taxation of real and personal property. These taxes are assessed to local property owners according to the fair market value of their property. This assessment is known as the municipal or town valuation and is determined by the local tax assessor.

According to the town report, Cooper's total real and personal property valuation was **\$12,807,840** in 2005 and has risen to **\$22,155,000** in 2009 (\$15,176,970 for 2006 and \$21,258,900 for 2007), a **73 %** increase. Figures for valuation in 2006 and 2007, in parentheses, describe a continuing upward trend and reflect the town wide revaluation conducted in 2007.

State law provides for tax exemptions for certain types of property, such as: charitable and benevolent, religious, literary and scientific, and governmental. Generally, such properties would be totally non-taxable by exemption. Partial exemptions also exist for veterans of foreign wars or their widows that have not re-married; individuals who are legally blind and homestead exemptions for the homeowner's primary residence. The state does provide some reimbursement to the municipalities for veteran and homestead exemptions. However, in many communities the number of exempt properties is increasing which decreases the municipal tax base. Since exemptions are established by statute, the town has virtually no choice but to grant an applicable exemption. Often, in such a case as a real estate transfer to a tax-exempt organization, the town has little notice that the property will seek exempt status and then the town must deal with the impact on the upcoming budget. As the amount of these exemptions increases, it becomes very difficult for the community to maintain a constant tax rate.

The state also places a total valuation on the town. This value is known as the State Valuation. Every year the Maine Revenue Services Property Tax Division reviews all arms length sales that have occurred in each community. (An arms length sale is a sale that occurs between a willing seller and a willing buyer without any extenuating circumstances. Examples of non-arms length sales could be estate sales, interfamily transfers, foreclosure sales, and auctions.) These sales are compared to the town's local assessed values to determine the assessment ratio or the percentage of market value that the town is assessing. The state's valuation is used to determine the amount of revenue sharing the town will receive and the portion of the county tax that the municipality will pay.

The state indicates that a town should be revalued at least once in every 10-year period and that a revaluation is required when the assessment ratio falls below 70 percent of market value. This should not be necessary for another 7-10 years given that the town's current state certified assessment ratio is at 100 percent of market value reflecting the town-wide revaluation in 2007.

## **MIL RATE**

After the town's budget has been approved and all applicable state and local revenues are deducted from the approved expenditures, the town arrives at the dollar amount that will be raised through tax revenues. This amount is called the net commitment or appropriation. The local assessor arrives at a valuation for each taxable property in the town and the taxpayers are assessed their share of the tax burden through a mathematical calculation. The total appropriation is then divided by the total taxable or assessed valuation of the town to arrive at the minimum tax rate. This rate is usually expressed in dollars per thousand-dollars of valuation, or in decimal form, commonly referred to as the mil rate. The difference between the amount that is actually committed to the collector and the total appropriation is called overlay. Overlay is commonly used to pay any tax abatements that are granted during that tax year. Any overlay that remains at the end of the year is usually placed into the general fund. The overlay cannot exceed 5 percent of the total appropriations. Since the mil rate is a direct result of a mathematical calculation, fluctuations in this rate will occur from year to year if there is a change in the total valuation or the tax commitment.

The mil rate in 2005 was 0.0195 and in 2009 was 0.0118. In 2006 the mil rate was 0.0206 and decreased to 0.0164 in 2007 when a town wide revaluation was completed.

Maine Municipal Association (MMA) has ranked local property tax burden for all Maine municipalities. Their calculation considered municipal full value mil rate, commitment, median household income, median home value and property tax. The most recent data available is from 1999. The table below shows selected municipalities in Washington County, as well as the countywide average. A rank of 1 was the highest burden and 486 was the lowest. Cooper was listed as number 74.

Table I-1: TAX BURDEN RANKINGS

Municipality	Tax Paid as % of Median Income	1999 Burden Rank
Alexander	3.18	285
<b>Cooper</b>	<b>4.76</b>	<b>74</b>
Lubec	6.61	15
Harrington	6.59	16
Eastport	6.56	17
Machias	5.78	35
Steuben	4.87	69
Jonesport	4.77	73
Milbridge	4.57	96
Addison	4.33	119
Columbia Falls	4.2	131
Calais	4.03	151
Beals	3.97	159
Cherryfield	3.66	202
Columbia	3.61	210
East Machias	3.34	259
Jonesboro	2.72	350
Beddington	1.32	468
Centerville	1.18	472
Deblois	0.89	479
Washington County Average	3.44	253

Source: Maine Municipal Association 1999

## MUNICIPAL REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

*Revenue*

The table below shows the major sources of municipal revenue for calendar years 2004 through 2008. Intergovernmental revenues consist of road maintenance funds and tree-growth, veteran, homestead and general assistance reimbursements. Departmental revenues are those dollars that are received through departmental user fees, application fees, etc. Total revenues increased by 13.5 percent during this period.

Table I-2: TOWN OF COOPER REVENUES 2004-2008

REVENUES	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Property Tax	\$ 267,827	\$ 248,436	\$ 267,582	\$ 240,224	\$ 249,571
Interest	\$ 1,574	\$ 1,849	\$ 1,418	\$ 2,323	\$ 3,386
Liens (interest charges)	\$ 935	\$ 1,536	\$ 1,587	\$ 1,808	\$ 2,276
Vehicle & Boat Excise	\$ 21,223	\$ 27,129	\$ 23,398	\$ 25,346	\$ 23,000
Intergovernmental Revenues (LRA)					
Education Subsidy	\$ 69,924	\$ 70,307	\$ 84,508	\$ 112,905	\$ 139,057
Rev Sharing	\$ 10,639	\$ 13,610	\$ 15,745	\$ 16,790	\$ 16,741
Highway Block Grant AKA Local Road Assistance	\$ 16,230	\$ 12,984	\$ 9,738	\$ 20,028	\$ 12,984
Tree Growth Reimbursement	\$ 8,481	\$ 18,324	\$ 13,354		\$ 10,435
Homestead Reimbursement	\$ 6,133	\$ 5,941	\$ 5,618	\$ 4,595	\$ 4,139
Other Education revenue	\$ 7,150	\$ 6,622			
Vet Reimbursement			\$ 50	\$ 115	\$ 91
Snowmobile refund				\$ 53	
Gen Assist. Reimbursement		\$ 443			\$ 193
Dept. Revenues			\$ 361	\$ 218	
Building Permits		\$ 280			
Plumbing Permits		\$ 200			
Cemetery income	\$ 15			\$ 200	
Charges or services/fees	\$ 1,165	\$ 1,789	\$ 610	\$ 368	\$ 4,079
Insurance refunds	\$ 1,986		\$ 204	\$ 50	\$ 207
Other revenue	\$ 275	\$ 2,360	\$ 1,167	\$ 1,488	\$ 3,085
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 413,557</b>	<b>\$ 411,810</b>	<b>\$ 425,340</b>	<b>\$ 426,511</b>	<b>\$ 469,244</b>

Source: Cooper Town Reports

## Expenditures

The table below shows the amount of money expended for each of the major departments within the town of Cooper for calendar years 2004 through 2008. In 2004, almost 62 percent of total expenditures went to education as compared to approximately 68 percent in 2009.

Total expenditures increased almost 34 percent from 2004 to 2008. Unlike other towns in the region this increase was not primarily attributable to education expenses, they increased by 9 percent. Rather it was expenditures on roads that increased by 61% in 5 years with wide fluctuations from year to year.

Expenditures are affected yearly, not only by the local budget but also by the amount of state revenue sharing. Some of the increases in 2006 and 2008 can be attributed to one time expenses such as the debt service of \$27,266 in 2006 and the town wide revaluation that cost \$28,000 in 2008. It is difficult to predict municipal expenditures for the next ten years. Demands for services, county assessments, valuation, population, and many other factors all enter the very political process of determining expenditures every year.

Table I-3: TOWN OF COOPER EXPENDITURES 2004-2008

EXPENDITURES	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
General government	\$ 19,634	\$ 20,935	\$ 21,369	\$ 26,066	\$ 26,942
Protection	\$ 5,330	\$ 7,103	\$ 8,113	\$ 7,466	\$ 6,805
Health and Sanitation	\$ 4,766	\$ 4,390	\$ 4,470	\$ 5,537	\$ 7,328
Public Works	\$ 80,822	\$ 60,093	\$ 129,181	\$ 75,770	\$ 130,230
Social services	\$ 506	\$ 3,330	\$ 1,930	\$ 2,703	\$ 4,101
Leisure services	\$ 465			\$ 550	\$ 370
Cemetery				\$ 1,600	\$ 1,800
Solid Waste					
Education	\$ 233,133	\$ 238,536	\$ 261,470	\$ 233,559	\$ 253,985
County Tax	\$ 25,188	\$ 26,945	\$ 25,966	\$ 26,651	\$ 27,222
Overlay					\$ 4,673
Unclassified	\$ 2,800	\$ 1,100	\$ 2,020	\$ 1,205	\$ 100
Revaluation					\$ 28,000
Alexander Municipal Building					\$ 3,000
Grange/Polling upgrade					\$ 3,176
Debt service		\$ 12,156	\$ 27,266		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 372,644</b>	<b>\$ 374,588</b>	<b>\$ 481,785</b>	<b>\$ 381,107</b>	<b>\$ 497,732</b>

Source: Cooper Town Reports

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The comprehensive plan recognizes planned growth and a diverse mix of land uses within the town as an important aspect of fiscal planning. The primary implementation strategy for the fiscal capacity section is the development of a capital improvement plan (CIP). The purpose of a CIP is to establish a framework for financing needed capital improvements. A CIP guides budgeting and expenditures of tax revenues and identifies needs for which alternative sources of funding such as loans, grants or gifts will be sought.

Capital improvements are investments in the repair, renewal, replacement or purchase of capital items which can include equipment and machinery, buildings, real property, utilities and long-term contracts. Capital improvements differ from operating expenses or consumables which are ordinarily budgeted as operations. Capital improvements are funded through the establishment of financial reserves and generally have an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more; usually do not recur annually; have a useful life of 3 or more years; and result in fixed assets.

For the purpose of this plan, the total costs have been recognized with an indication of the expected time frame for each item that is desired based on priority ratings. Each year the Budget Committee will review the funding requests and make a recommendation for town meeting review.

The capital improvements identified below were assigned a priority based on the listed rating system. Logically, "A" improvements would be implemented prior to "B" and so on. A lower priority item may be funded ahead of schedule if higher priority items have already been funded or are prohibitively expensive, or if other sources of revenue (such as donated funds) become available. In order to fund some capital improvements projects, it may be necessary to begin to identify funding sources and set aside funds in advance of the projected time of funding.

**A** - Immediate need. A capital improvement rated in this category would typically remedy a danger to public health, safety and welfare.

**B** - Necessary, to be accomplished within 2 to 5 years. A capital improvement rated in this category would typically correct deficiencies in an existing facility or service.

**C** - Future improvement or replacement, to be accomplished within 5 to 10 years. A capital improvement rated in this category would be desirable but is of no urgency. Funding would be flexible and there would be no immediate problem.

**D** - Desirable, but not necessarily feasible within the 10- year time frame of the current plan.

Projects previously in this comprehensive plan and existing reserve accounts are the basis for this capital improvement plan and have been incorporated into the table below.

Table I-4: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN – COOPER

Item	Costs (\$)	Priority	Responsibility	Funding Sources
Town office/ Town records storage	50,000-100,000	B	Town	Taxes, Escrow accounts, donated/reduced time and materials through residents and/or WCCC class project
If NO Town office: Purchase/Renovate/upgrade Cathance Grange	50,000-100,000	B	Town	As above
Reconstruction/improvements to Route 191	10,000,000	A	State	Bond, Highway Fund
Upgrade or replace inadequate well and septic systems	20,000 – 30,000	A	Town	Small Community Grant Program (DEP)
Sand salt shed	50,000	D	Town	Town
Road Improvements	Several million	A	State	Bonds; Biennial Capital Improvement Plans; local taxes
Two dry hydrants	6,000	B	Town	Taxes
New or expanded cemetery	10,000 – 20,000	C	Selectmen	Taxes
Public trail	20,000 - 50,000	C	Selectmen; Breakneck Mountain Snowmobile Club	Recreational Trail Grant Program; taxes;

## SUMMARY

As indicated by the figures, Cooper has been doing very well in managing its finances over the last five years and the mil rate has remained within a consistent range. In the past, the town has budgeted for capital improvements through the use of grant funds and local revenues. A new reserve account was approved in 2008 for potential expenses associated with renovation of the Grange, if needed, and a Capital Investment Plan is now proposed as part of the Comprehensive Plan. The town has kept funds in surplus in the past to cover capital improvements and will now formally create a capital investment reserve account with some of these funds.

## **J. LAND USE**

Cooper is a rural community of 32.6 square miles or 20,837 acres. The town shares one large lake with the neighboring unorganized territory of Cathance Township. It is at the headwaters of several regional rivers including the Dennys, the East Machias and the St. Croix. There are also many streams and wetlands, extensive forestland and several areas of open blueberry land.

There are 145 full time residents, many of whom commute for work to the regional service centers of Calais, Woodland and Machias. Many seasonal residents have second homes on Cathance Lake.

Residential and home based development in the town is scattered along existing roadways and surrounding Cathance Lake. There is virtually no commercial activity though there are many home-based businesses, and some agricultural operations. A former grocery store near Cathance Lake closed in 2006. Most recent development has occurred along the lake shoreline. State Route 191 travels 13 miles through the town of Cooper and, for most of that distance, is in the worst condition of any major collector road in Washington County.

### **PAST DEVELOPMENT TRENDS**

Development in Cooper was driven and supported by farming and the timber industry. Farming was central to the livelihood of Cooper people from the first settler until after World War Two. As we enter the twenty-first century, blueberries are the largest field crop in Cooper. These blueberry fields give Cooper its wonderful open areas and scenic views.

Early sawmills provided for the local market. In the 1800s there were mills in North Union off Dead Stream and at the end of West Ridge. Another mill off Whiff Hill operated until 1950. A lathe and shingle mill also operated on Old Mill Road. None are currently active. With few exceptions, all the structures built in Cooper during the nineteenth century were related to the farm; the single family home that might house three generations of the one family, the barn(s), and other outbuildings necessary for farming. The exceptions were the schoolhouses, the Churches, logging camps, and the few small mills.

Settlement in Cooper took place in three areas including Grove (where the Cathance Grange still stands), East Ridge and West Ridge. Many old farm houses and buildings have long since fallen in or burned. In the early 1900s many farmers headed west and open lands and hayfields started growing back to brush and forest. Local historian Justin Day estimates that over 1000 acres of hayfield have grown back to forest in the last century. He says that the woodlands are full of scattered rock piles, stone walls, cellar holes and abandoned wells. The only remaining open land in Cooper of any significance is blueberry land.

Today families supplement their income by working in the blueberry harvest or in the Christmas greenery business. Much of the forestland in Cooper still produces fir tips, logs, fuel, and fiber for local and area needs. Most of the harvest is now mechanical. Some local people are employed in harvesting and transporting these products, some in industry using them, and some landowners

supplement their income by selling them.

## EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN

Cooper's existing land use patterns are summarized in the descriptions of Land Cover shown in Table K-1 and are illustrated on several Maps in this document including Map 2, Cooper Public Facilities and Transportation; Map 6, Land Cover (from which the data in Table K-1 is derived); and Map 9, Existing Land Use and Shoreland Zoning, located at the end of this section.

The source data for Map 6 – Land Cover (and Table K-1) is 1997 satellite imagery; the land cover types are generated by computer program assumptions. As a result they must be qualified by knowledge of actual conditions on the ground. A review of Map 6 – Land Cover by the Comprehensive Plan Committee concludes that Map 6 is generally accurate but is incorrect in several locations with respect to cultivated land and development. Map 6 should be used as a general depiction of forestland, the larger blueberry barrens and wetlands. However the following specific qualifications are needed when looking at Map 6 – Land Cover:

- The Cultivated Land (yellow) is actually open land or grass/pasture; those categories can be combined on the map and in Table K-2 below.
- The developed land is over stated along Route 191 (the satellite is picking up the road surface and not developed land), along East Ridge Road, along North Union Road and Breakneck Road. In all of these locations there are widely scattered houses and not a solid line of development as the red line appears to indicate.
- The satellite imagery also picks up heavily cut forest land and logging roads in the northwest corner of the town, and in the area north of Birch Point and south of Route 191. These areas are not “developed” with houses or other structures.
- Contrary to this over-depiction of developed land there is a lot of development along the shores of Cathance Lake that the satellite does not pick up. For instance there are many camps and houses along the shore and on the roads leading into the lake from Route 191 in the southwest corner of the town and on the eastern shore of the lake near Cove Road (Mount Holly Estates), Day Road, Camp Rod and Callies Way.

**Table J-1 – Existing Land Cover**

<b>Land Cover</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Square Miles</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Blueberry	1,134	1.8	5%
Cultivated	197	0.3	1%
Developed	230	0.4	1%
Forest (Total)	17,307	27	83%
<i>Forest, Clear Cut</i>	220	0.3	1%
<i>Forest, Heavy Cut</i>	491	0.8	2%
<i>Forest, Light Cut</i>	1,147	1.8	6%
Grass/Pasture	33	0.1	>1%
Open Land	0	0.0	>1%
Wetland/Open Water	1,935	3.0	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,837</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Land Cover and Wetlands of the Gulf of Maine. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gulf of Maine Program and MEGIS

There is limited commercial development in Cooper. It is primarily service oriented, farm and forest in nature. Residential development is composed of year round and seasonal housing that is located primarily around Cathance Lake.

### **DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE**

Several large tracts of forest land have changed hands in the past few years. These transactions have primarily been among industrial forestland owners and have not changed to development use; 4395 acres of this land has been placed under conservation easement (see Map 2).

With other changes in ownership near lakeshores the demand for waterfront property is driving up land values, contributing to land subdivision and new housing is larger and more expensive. In addition former seasonal camps are being converted to, and renovated for, year-round use.

There are no schools in Cooper; student enrollment in the region is discussed in the Public Facilities chapter.

### **ANTICIPATED FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TRENDS**

The town's population has risen steadily in the past 40 years. The State Planning Office predicts that the population of Cooper will rise to 148 individuals by 2010, to 151 by 2015 and to 152 individuals by 2020.

As noted in the Population Section, in the 1990s Cooper experienced a 16.9% increase in population to 145 persons. In 2000, Cooper had a total of 165 housing units. If the 2000 census is compared only to the 1990 census it appears that during the 1990s, the town recorded a near doubling (98.8% percent increase) in its housing stock, compared to almost 15 percent for Washington County and 11 percent for the state – see Table 1. However, this magnitude of an increase did not pass the “straight face” test with the Comprehensive Plan Committee. When the 1980 census data is examined (see Table F-1) it appears that the 1990 census missed a significant portion of housing units in Cooper<sup>1</sup>. The percentage increase in the number of housing units in Cooper between 1980 and 2000 (from 129 to 165) is only 27.9%. This magnitude of an increase makes sense to the members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, many of whom have served as assessors or on the Planning Board during the 1980-2000 time period.

As noted in the Population Section, in the 1990s Cooper experienced a 16.9% increase in population and close to a 10.07% percent decline in average household size to 2.59 persons per household. Both factors, increasing population and reduction in household size, account for some of the increase in the number of houses.

---

<sup>1</sup> The 1990 Census also appears to have undercounted the number of housing units in Baileyville, Baring Plantation, Calais and East Machias but a full examination of that discrepancy is beyond the scope of this document.

Again, if one only looks at the change between 1990 and 2000, seasonal units increased by 157.9% adding 60 units of seasonal housing. However, according to the 1980 census there were 81 seasonal units in Cooper but only 38 seasonal units in the 1990 census. According to the Cooper assessment records, there were no large losses of seasonal units between 1980 and 1990. So it is highly likely that census workers in April of 1990 did not know of (or bother to find) over 40 seasonal units that were probably located on camp roads when ice was still on the lake and seasonal roads were deeply rutted with mud. Seasonal units increased from 81 to 98 units in the 20 year period between 1980 and 2000. This is only a 21% increase and not the huge apparent increase if only the 1990 and 2000 census numbers are compared.

Housing for seasonal purposes constitutes 59 percent of the housing stock in Cooper. Thus second home development of shorefront properties has a larger impact than year-round population on the number of housing units in Cooper and this trend is expected to continue. Given the very large inaccuracies evident in the 1990 census of seasonal housing in Cooper, any analysis of growth trends in housing in Cooper must include the 1980 census even after the 2010 census is complete.

While Cooper has a large supply of seasonal units, residential development has decreased in recent years with the majority of building activity (sheds/decks/garages/additions) taking place on already developed properties (see Table F-2). Single-unit housing is expected to be the primary type of future development as seasonal units are converted to year round use, especially on shorefront properties in Cooper. However, the long term trend of high gas prices may be dampening year round development pressure as fewer people choose the long commutes demanded by Cooper residents to reach to regional employment opportunities.

Population projections based on the 2000 census are reaching the end of their shelf life. Data from the 2010 census is not yet available but is expected to reflect modest increases in population that have occurred in the region as a result of increases in permanent staff at the international border. Increases in school enrollment in Calais (2002-2005) already reflect population increases due to increases in Homeland Security staff since September 11, 2001 and estimates vary that between 50 and 125 additional families will locate in the area once all of the facilities associated with the new international bridge are in full operation. A countervailing influence on this increase would result if the mill in Woodland closes.

## **PRESENT LAND USE REGULATIONS**

Apart from the State required minimums, the Town of Cooper has a limited set of regulatory measures to affect the nature and pattern of development. Building permits are required and several existing land use regulations that municipal boards and officials must follow are listed below. Regulations change over time and it is the responsibility of municipal officers to keep up with these changes.

MDOT Access Management (17-229 Maine Administrative Rules Chapter 299, Part A and B) - The Act specifically directs the MDOT and authorized municipalities to promulgate rules to assure safety and proper drainage on all state and state aid highways with a focus on maintaining

posted speeds on arterial highways outside urban compact areas. The law also requires that the rules include standards for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of safety hazards along the portions of rural arterials where the 1999 statewide average for driveway related crash rates is exceeded. Those rural arterials are referred to in the rules as "Retrograde Arterials". There are no such retrograde arterials in all of Washington County.

Shoreland Zoning Ordinance (Maine *Land Use Laws*, 1992) - Shoreland areas include those areas within 250 feet of the normal high-water line of any great pond, river or saltwater body, within 250 feet of the upland edge of a coastal or freshwater wetland, or within 75 feet of the high-water line of a stream. The purposes of these controls are: to further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions; to prevent and control water pollution; to protect fish spawning grounds, aquatic life, bird and other wildlife habitat; to protect archaeological and historic resources; to protect commercial fishing and maritime industries; to protect freshwater and coastal wetlands; to control building sites, placement of structures and land uses; to conserve shore covers, and visual as well as actual points of access to inland and coastal waters; to conserve natural beauty and open space; and to anticipate and respond to the impacts of development in shoreland areas. Cooper is currently updating its Shoreland Zoning Ordinance to meet the changes to the Guidelines issued in 2006 and it contains the following districts:

Resource Protection District (RP)  
Limited Residential District (LR)  
Stream Protection District (SP)

The community adheres to the Maine State Plumbing Code which requires that the installation of plumbing fixtures and septic systems be in accordance with the Maine State Law and the Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules and Regulations.

## **AREAS UNSUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT**

There are areas within Cooper that require special consideration based on the potential environmental impact of land use activities. In these areas stricter regulation or, in some circumstances, prohibition may be called for to avoid problems for both people and the town's natural resources. These areas include:

Floodplains – These are flood prone areas where flooding is frequent and can be severe. Use needs to be limited to activities unharmed by flooding, such as agriculture, forest and some types of recreation. By definition maritime activities and businesses that locate in flood prone areas and construction standards must take these risks into account.

Water Resources/Wetlands - These are areas that fall under the Shoreland Zoning Laws. Development in these areas is severely restricted and requires review and approval by the pertinent State Agencies.

Wildlife Habitat/Conservation - These are areas that fall under the provisions of the applicable mandated legislation. Development in these areas is severely restricted and requires review and

approval by the pertinent State Agencies.

Unsuitable Soils - These are areas with limited development potential because of poor soils. Larger lot sizes would be required in order to meet the requirements of the Maine State Plumbing Laws.

Slopes - These are areas that have a slope greater than 15 percent that preclude extensive development because of problems with erosion, runoff, and construction limitations such as allowable road grades, suitability for septic sewage disposal, and stability of foundation. Also, the Maine Plumbing Code does not permit septic systems on a slope greater than 25 percent.

## **PROPOSED LAND USE DISTRICTS**

Growth management legislation requires the designation of growth and rural areas in comprehensive plans. The designation of growth areas is intended to direct development to areas most suitable for growth and away from areas where intensive growth and development would be incompatible with the protection of rural resources. In addition, growth areas should be located close to municipal services to minimize the cost to the municipality for their delivery and maintenance. As Cooper has almost no municipal services this concept does not fit in its predominantly rural setting. However an attempt is made to translate the concept to Cooper.

The designation of rural areas is intended to allow dispersed development that reflects an existing pattern and to protect agricultural, forest, wildlife habitat, scenic areas, and other open space areas from incompatible development.

If any new regulations are adopted pursuant to the districts established in the Comprehensive Plan all existing uses and the lot sizes on which they currently exist are “grandfathered”, i.e. they have the right to persist as built.

### **Growth Areas**

In any municipality, the purpose of the Land Use Plan and map is to identify appropriate locations to accommodate anticipated growth and future development. The Proposed Land Use Plan is drawn in “broad brush” and does not identify specific parcels. Only detailed site-specific analysis can determine land suitable for development and at what densities. In addition, the comprehensive plan has not assessed the individual landowner's desires to sell their land for development, to develop it or to leave it undeveloped.

In Cooper, the town proposes two types of Growth Districts in five distinct areas to reflect existing conditions and enable areas for commercial, residential and civic services.

The districts proposed as growth areas are described below and illustrated on the Proposed Land Use Map at the end of this section.

**Civic Service and Facilities (CSF)**

The purpose of this district is to support an existing concentration of municipal services as well as residential and commercial development in areas where they currently exist and where land is accessible to improved roads. Three areas of Civic Service and Facilities are proposed, all where limited facilities and services currently exist. One encompasses the existing Cathance Grange and the General Cooper cemetery, another surrounds the Fire Department, and the other includes the sand and salt pile and associated work yards. Small lot sizes (1-2 acres) exist and the same minimum lot size pattern will be continued. Any future land use ordinance will specify the types and sizes of civic uses allowed and will be guided by existing conditions. As required by state law any proposed mobile home parks will only be allowed in these growth areas. The ordinance will also include coordinated access to ensure Route 191 retains its function as a north-south collector corridor, and other standards in keeping with the existing pattern.

**Limited Commercial (LC)**

The purpose of this district is to support limited commercial activity. It is a small area encompassing the area where the former store operated and is near to the most densely developed residential area on Cathance Lake. Similar lot sizes (a minimum of 1-2 acres) to current conditions will be allowed. Any future land use ordinance will specify the types and sizes of commercial uses allowed and will be guided by existing conditions. The ordinance will also include coordinated access to ensure Route 191 retains its function as a north-south collector corridor, and other standards in keeping with the existing pattern.

**Rural Areas**

The Rural Areas consists of those areas in Cooper where new residential and home based business development will be regulated to limit its impact on the town's important natural resources including agricultural land, forested land, wetlands and scenic areas.

The rural districts have varying recommended lot sizes to protect resources within them but Cooper will also discourage development in these sensitive areas through its public investment decisions. For instance, the town will periodically review whether to continue providing winter maintenance (plowing/sanding) on unpaved town roads. In addition, road and lot design will encourage a limited number of access points on main roads. Access for future development/use to the rear of larger lots will also be maintained as subdivision along roadways takes place.

To assure that those living in all parts of town can give their children a building lot, family lot transfers would be exempt from the regular lot size requirements. Unless health and safety considerations mandated a larger lot size, a minimum of 30,000 square feet would be allowed in such cases. This provision would apply to family lot transfers exempt from subdivision review under the state subdivision law (30-A MRSA 4401 section 4-D).

The land use districts proposed in the rural areas are described below and shown on the Proposed Land Use Map at the end of this section.

**Low Density Residential/Home Based Business<sup>2</sup> (LDR/HBB)**

The purpose of this district is to support a low density, rural pattern of development along Route 191 in two areas where the highest existing density occurs. The minimum lot size will be ½ to 1 acre and road frontage requirements will be 100-200 feet. Residential, home-based business uses as well as commercial agricultural and commercial forestry operations will be permitted.

**Very Low Density Residential/Home Based Business (VLDR/HBB)**

The purpose of this district is to maintain the rural character of the town, to protect agricultural and forestry uses, and to provide for single family residential dwellings with larger lot sizes. The minimum lot size will be 1-2 acres. Road frontage requirements will be 250 feet (less in cluster designs) to maintain the rural character of the town. Commercial agricultural and commercial forestry operations will be permitted, as well as limited business use.

Cluster development may be appropriate within this district. All large (>10 lots) subdivision development proposals within this district will be required to submit a cluster plan, as well as a conventional plan for the Planning Board's consideration. Cluster Developments included in any land use ordinance will encourage the preservation of rural land areas. Development regulations should encourage residential development to occur on existing or newly-constructed roads following existing road patterns. Developers are responsible for proper road construction and maintenance.

**Agricultural Low Density Residential (ALDR)**

The Agricultural Low Density Residential District includes areas of most intensive use for blueberry production. Uses will be limited to agriculture and low density residential (3-7 acres/dwelling unit). Limited commercial operations will be allowed that support agriculture. Specifically prohibited uses would include, for example, large scale fuel storage, containment and distribution, heavy industry and the like. Cluster development would also be appropriate within this district.

**Conservation (C)**

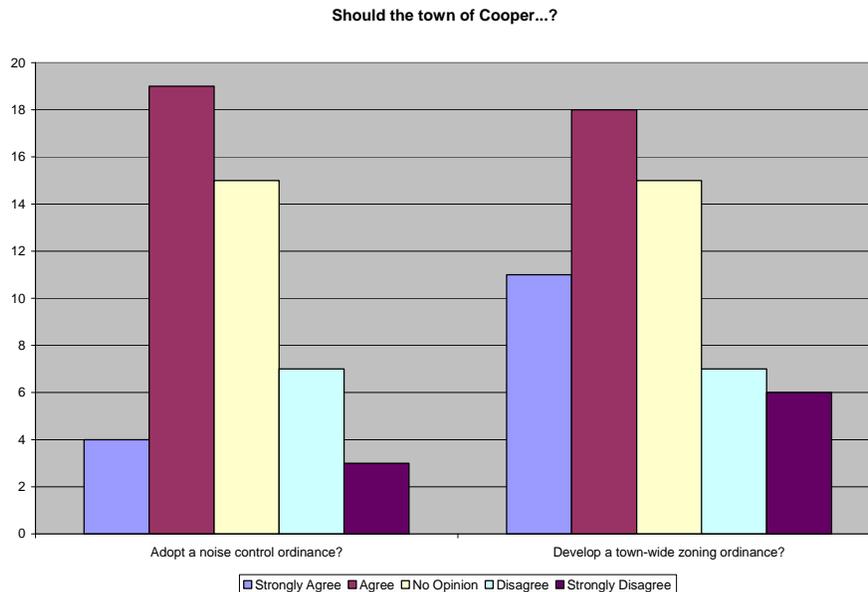
The Conservation District includes areas in which development would be detrimental to Cooper's most critical natural resources – the Stream Shore Ecosystem on the Dennys River that forms a border of Cooper with the town of Charlotte, and the three Rare and Exemplary plant communities in the Meddybemps Heath, a Focus Area of Statewide Significance. Lot sizes will be large (greater than 5 acres), development will be severely limited in areas in excess of 20% slopes, and timber management and land protection measures will be encouraged. Existing development in these areas will continue, i.e. be “grandfathered”. The protection measures under consideration include cooperation with local land trusts that have the means or tax advantage alternatives to compensate landowners who choose to voluntarily restrict their property by conservation easement or sell it for conservation purposes.

---

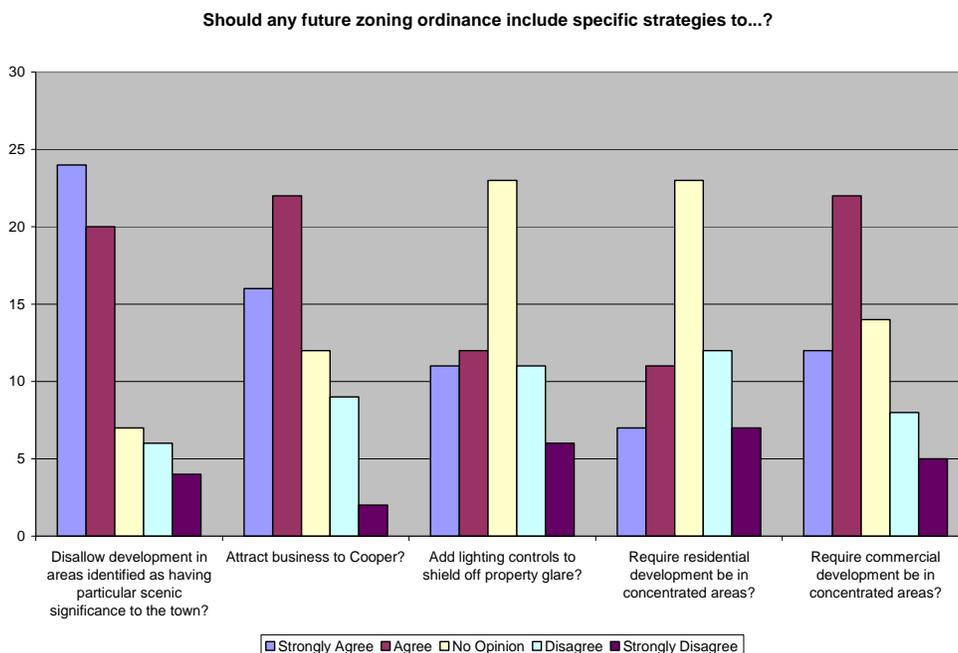
<sup>2</sup> Home Based Businesses include but are not necessarily limited to professional office, home daycare, hair cutting services, contractors using accessory buildings, small engine repair, publishing, etc.

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCES AND LAND USE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The people of Cooper have expressed their support for the town to prevent uncontrolled development through development of a zoning ordinance and a noise control ordinance.



Specific provisions in a future zoning ordinance generated a range of opinions. Disallowing development in areas identified as having particular scenic significance was strongly supported. Including provisions that could attract business to Cooper was supported as was requiring that commercial development be in concentrated areas. Requiring residential development to be in concentrated areas was not supported nearly as much and many had no opinion on the idea. Many also had no opinion on adding lighting controls to shield off property glare.



The various growth and rural districts proposed above are consistent with these views. The town should consider development of ordinances. Such ordinances might require that all developments provide a detailed site plan and set forth restrictions to minimize conflicts.

The Comprehensive Planning Committee is guided by the opinions expressed in the public survey but is also aware that Cooper is a small rural town that does not uniformly embrace restrictive regulations. Cooper’s Zoning Ordinance, when developed, will be consistent with the intent of this comprehensive plan and cognizant of this reluctance to infringe on the rights of landowners.

Thus, land use regulations will be kept to the minimum necessary to achieve the goals of the comprehensive plan and to reduce the number of non-conforming properties. It is not the intent of the Comprehensive Planning Committee to impose burdensome requirements on the everyday activities of the town’s residents or to create costly enforcement issues for town government. The ultimate goal of growth management is to regulate land use development to the extent necessary to protect natural resources, property values, and public safety. However, the imposed regulations should not make the town’s residents feel that they have lost their freedom as landowners. Therefore land use regulation should not be so restrictive that they have negative impacts on existing land use practices.

Ordinances need specific standards and clear definitions. They must also meet the minimum requirements of state law and be consistent with the recommendations of the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan provides the legal basis for enacting the ordinances, and their consistency with the plans, goals, and policies will be a major consideration in the event that the ordinances are subject to a legal challenge.

Therefore the land use ordinance will: (1) create a user friendly application and permitting process; (2) assign more responsibility for review and approval to code enforcement; and (3) develop clear and consistent guidelines for obtaining approval.

**LAND USE ORDINANCE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

The town of Cooper will develop a Zoning Ordinance consistent with the identified needs of the town. In order to protect and preserve natural resources, property values, public safety including fire protection, health and welfare, provide for affordable housing and ensure the proper future development of the town, the following performance standard topic areas should be considered when developing the town’s zoning ordinance.

<b>Public Issue or Concern</b>	<b>Performance Standard</b>
<i>Access Requirements</i>	In keeping with state access management regulations (17-229 Maine Administrative Rules Chapter 299, Part A and B, and as subsequently amended), minimize the creation of strip development within the community, and minimize the creation of road hazards.
<i>Agriculture</i>	Minimize soil erosion to avoid sedimentation, non-point source pollution, and phosphorus and nitrogen levels of water bodies.

<b>Public Issue or Concern</b>	<b>Performance Standard</b>
<i>Buffer Provisions</i>	Minimize the negative impacts of inconsistent development and protect water resources, wetlands, and wells
<i>Conversion</i>	Regulate the conversion of existing structures into multi-family dwellings, to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of citizens.
<i>Home Occupation</i>	Home occupations may be established to minimize their impact on existing neighborhoods.
<i>Industrial Performance Standards</i>	Ensure appropriate industrial development within designated areas of the community.
<i>Manufactured housing</i>	Ensure the safety, health and welfare of mobile home occupants and mobile home owners regardless of the date manufactured.
<i>Mobile Home Park</i>	Regulate the placement and design of mobile home parks within the designated growth areas in the town.
<i>Off Street Loading</i>	Minimize traffic congestion associated with commercial development.
<i>Oil and Chemical Storage</i>	Regulate the location and containment of combustible material that can migrate to surface and ground waters.
<i>Parking Requirements</i>	Establish and regulate the number of parking spaces to be provided for different types of development.
<i>Pesticide Application</i>	Protect the public from dangers associated with pesticides
<i>Refuse Disposal</i>	Regulate the disposal of solid and liquid wastes in relation to resources that can transport them or be contaminated by them; to protect public health.
<i>Road Construction</i>	In conjunction with the State Department of Transportation, regarding road construction in new developments.
<i>Sedimentation and Erosion</i>	Minimize the volume of surface water runoff during and after development.
<i>Signs</i>	Regulate the placement of signs, sign size, and sign type.
<i>Soils</i>	Ensure development is located on appropriate soils.
<i>Storage Materials</i>	Encourage the orderly storage of material in residential areas to promote and preserve the character of the neighborhoods.
<i>Topsoil and Vegetation Removal</i>	Prevent soil erosion and destruction of topsoil during construction.

## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Comprehensive planning demonstrates the importance of land use standards for Cooper. Preserving and protecting the character of the town is vital to the continued stability of the local economy and to the happiness and well being of the townspeople. Consistent with the provisions of the Growth Management Legislation, Cooper's Comprehensive Plan has attempted to recognize the value of surface water access and land use standards, to incorporate the desires of the community, and to preserve and protect the integrity of the town. All of this is done so as to continue to make Cooper a great place to live, work and vacation.

## SUMMARY

Cooper is feeling development pressure associated with conversion of residential second home subdivisions along lakefronts. Support exists for regulation on development activity but there is

some concern that it not be excessive or burdensome. This plan is intended to protect the town's character and to direct residential and commercial activities to appropriate areas. It also seeks to ensure that residents can continue to support themselves with a mixture of activities necessitated by seasonal and diverse rural livelihoods.

# Cooper Comprehensive Plan Washington County, Maine

# MAP 9: Existing Land Use

Data Sources:  
Maine Office of GIS  
Garmin GPS Receiver  
Universal Transverse  
Mercator- Zone 19N  
North American Datum- 1983

— State Road  
— Town Road\*  
- - - Town Road (Unpaved)\*  
- - - Private Unpaved Road\*  
— Perennial Stream

\* Refer to pg G-9 regarding town & private roads.

 Existing conserved lands

 Significant Wetlands

### Land Use Areas

 Civic service / facilities

 Low density residential

 Agricultural / low density residential

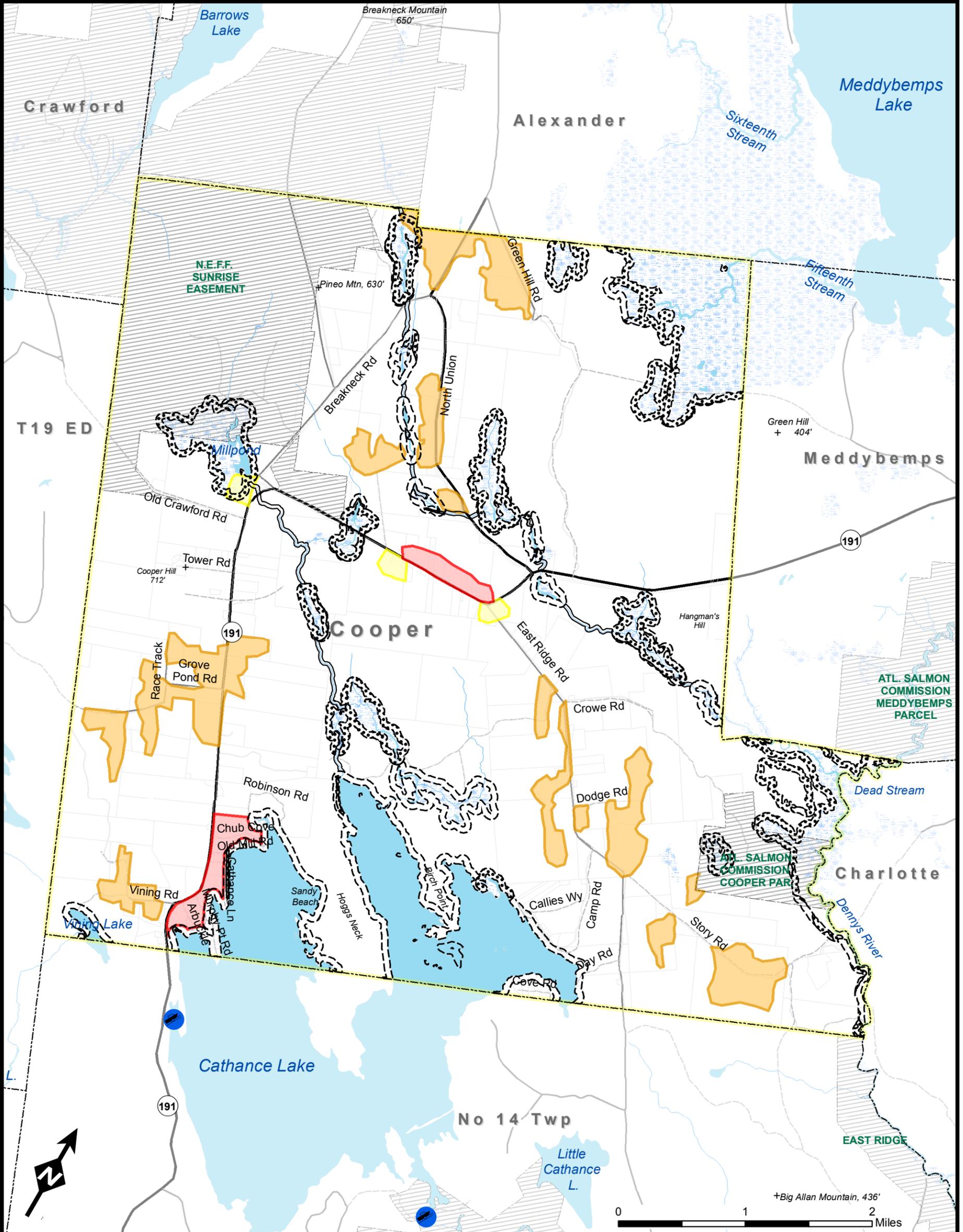
 Very low density residential / home-based business

### Shoreland Zone

 Resource Protection

 Stream Protection

 Limited Residential



# Cooper Comprehensive Plan Washington County, Maine

# MAP 10: Proposed Land Use

Data Sources:  
Maine Office of GIS  
Garmin GPS Receiver  
Universal Transverse  
Mercator- Zone 19N  
North American Datum- 1983

— State Road  
— Town Road\*  
- - - Town Road (Unpaved)\*  
- - - Private Unpaved Road\*  
— Perennial Stream

Existing conserved lands  
Significant Wetlands

### Growth Areas

Yellow box: Civic service / facilities  
Red box with diagonal lines: Limited commercial

### Rural Areas

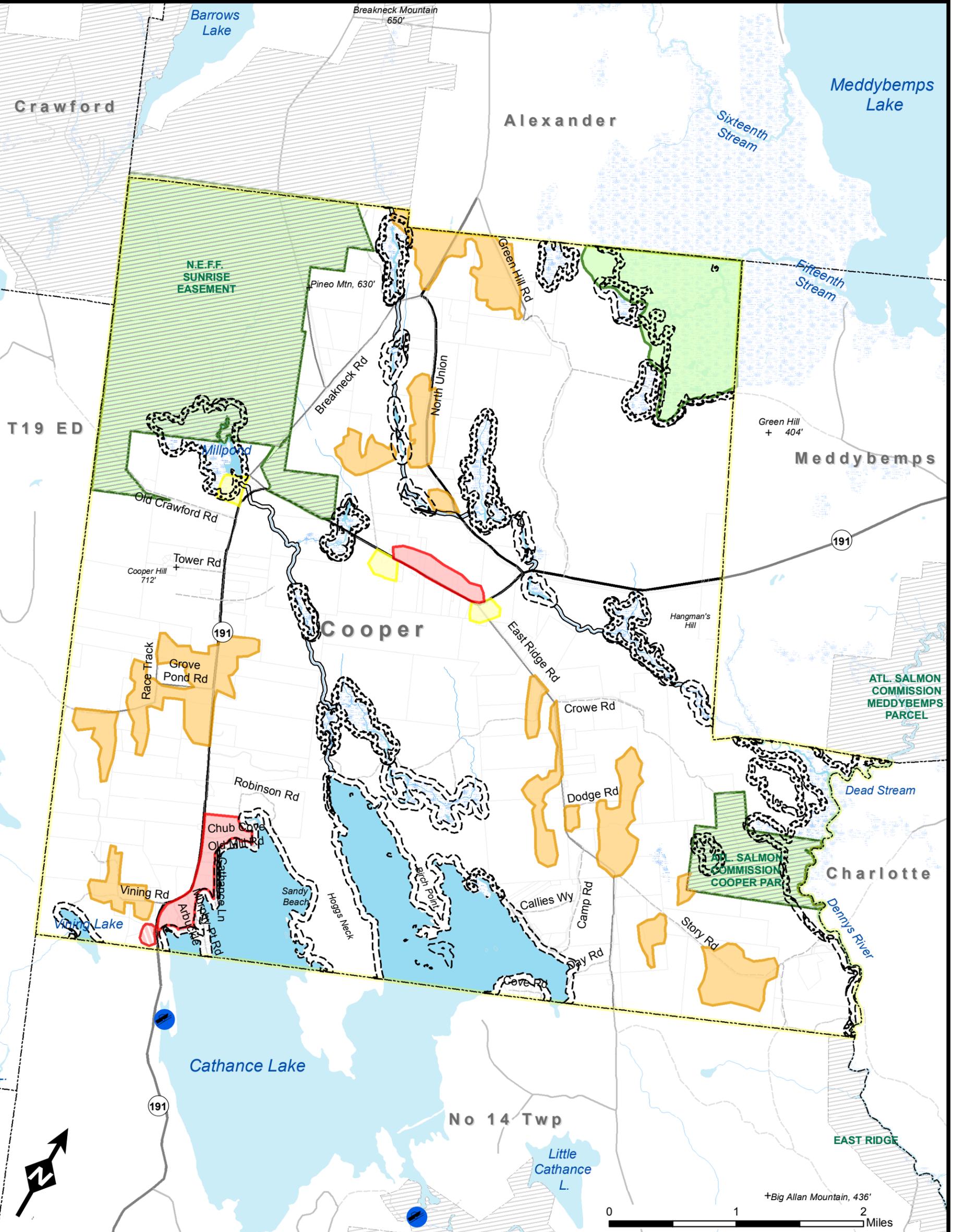
Red box: Low density residential / home-based business  
Orange box: Agricultural / low density residential  
White box with black outline: Very low density residential / home-based business

### Critical Natural Areas

Green box: Conservation

### Shoreland Zone

Black dotted box: Resource Protection  
White box with black outline: Stream Protection  
White box with black outline: Limited Residential



## K. TOWN SURVEY RESULTS

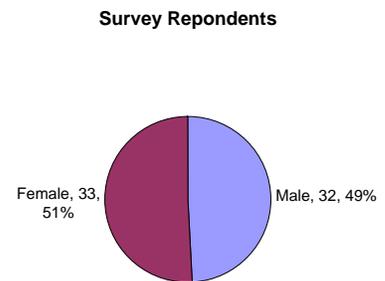
The survey that was mailed to town residents (including renters) and non-residents in January-February of 2009 is reproduced in Appendix A. There were 236 surveys mailed to all resident households and non-resident property owners. Surveys were mailed back to the town Comprehensive Plan Committee or respondents could complete the survey on-line. A total of 28 surveys were completed on-line and an additional 40 surveys were returned through the mail for a total of 70 surveys, a 29.6% response rate. The survey included an incentive of the chance to win \$100 worth of fuel oil for all completely filled out survey forms with a winner announced at the Annual Town Meeting on March 31.

There were many responses to the four open ended questions at the end of the survey as well as other written comments throughout the survey. All of these written responses are reproduced in Appendix A. Summaries of the written comments are noted with the charted data here and throughout the document as the issues they address are raised. The raw data is available at the town office and graphical summaries of the responses are provided here.

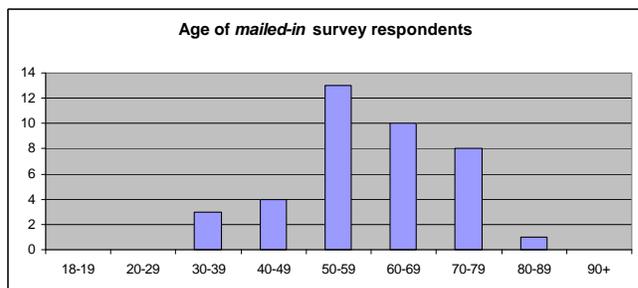
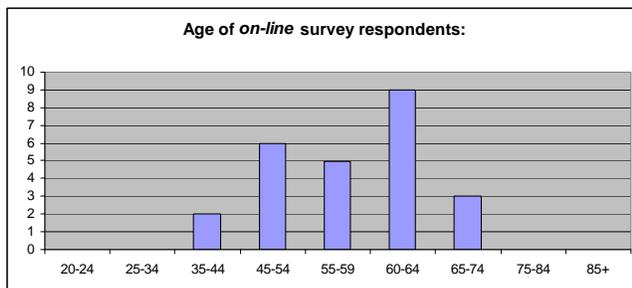
### SURVEY RESULTS

#### A. General

The cross section of survey respondents reflects a comparable proportion of males and females as exist in the general population.

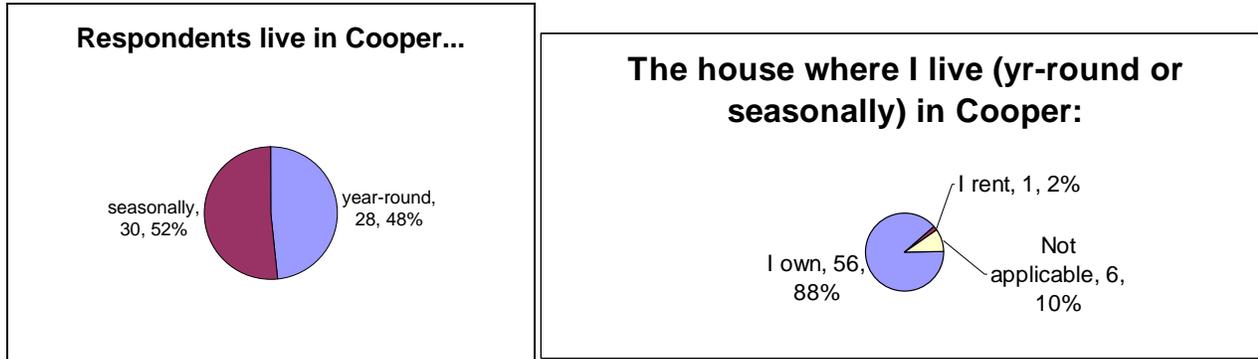


The question about the age of respondents inadvertently provided slightly different age groupings on the printed and on-line versions of the survey. The responses of each group (on-line vs. mailed-in survey respondents) are shown below. Those who responded on-line were somewhat younger overall but both charts indicate respondents are more heavily weighted to the opinions of those over 40 years of age than the age distribution of the population.



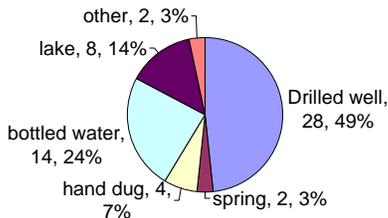
NOTE: The total number of respondents varies throughout the survey responses because not all respondents answered all of the questions.

Slightly more respondents indicated that they live in Cooper seasonally but many people did not answer this question. Actual property owners in Cooper are composed of 145 individuals year round and approximately 250 seasonal residents. The average length of time that respondents have lived in Cooper was essentially the same for year-round (25.5 years) as for seasonal (26.4 years) respondents. Of those who responded to the question the vast majority own the home in which they live.

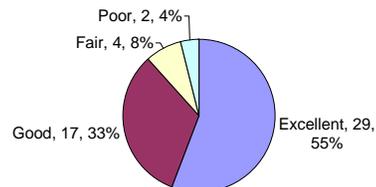


Half the respondents described their water source as a drilled well while the remainder obtain their water from the lake, a spring, a hand dug well or from bottled water. Satisfaction with water is generally very good though nearly a third of respondents filter their drinking water for such things as sand, bacteria, soil, iron and sediment (see also written comments in Appendix A).

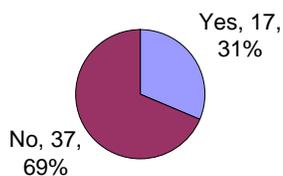
**Source of respondent's household drinking water**



**Respondent's rating of their drinking water:**



**Respondents who filter their drinking water...**

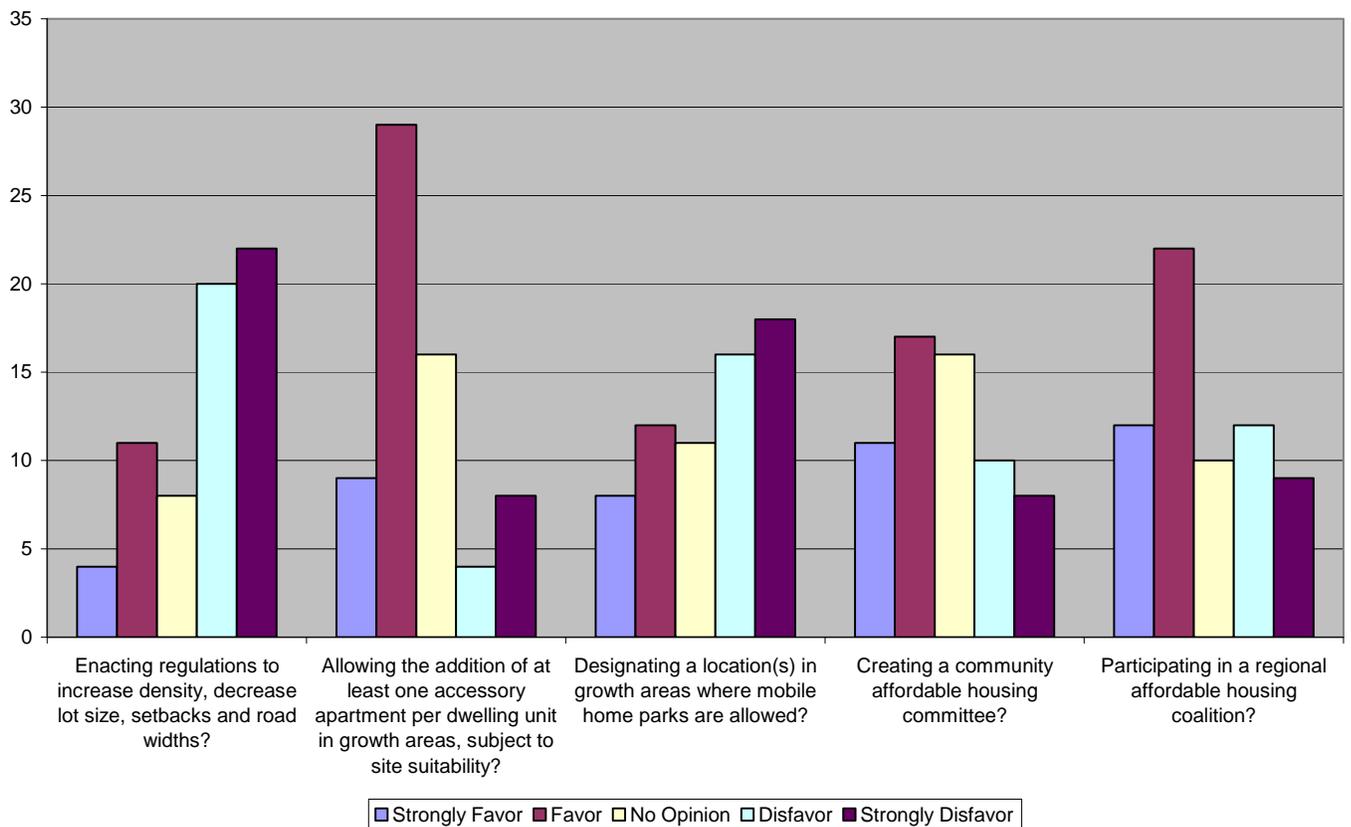


**B. Housing, Development and Preservation**

Questions on housing in the survey were focused on the types of strategies towns can implement to make housing more affordable to residents. Respondents generally did not favor dimensional regulations that allowed greater density. Neither did they favor areas in growth areas for mobile home parks though opinions were not as strong against this concept as they were against regulatory options.

Respondents do favor allowing accessory apartments and participating in a regional affordable housing coalition. Opinions were mixed on creating a community affordable housing committee.

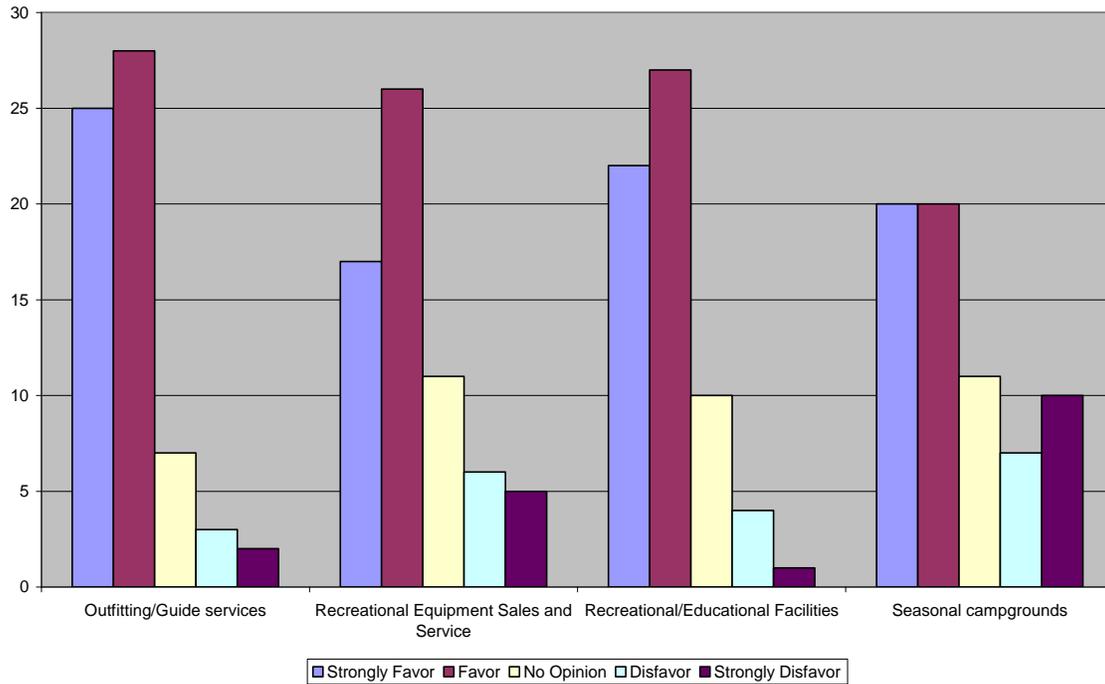
**To make housing less expensive do you favor...?**



**Development**

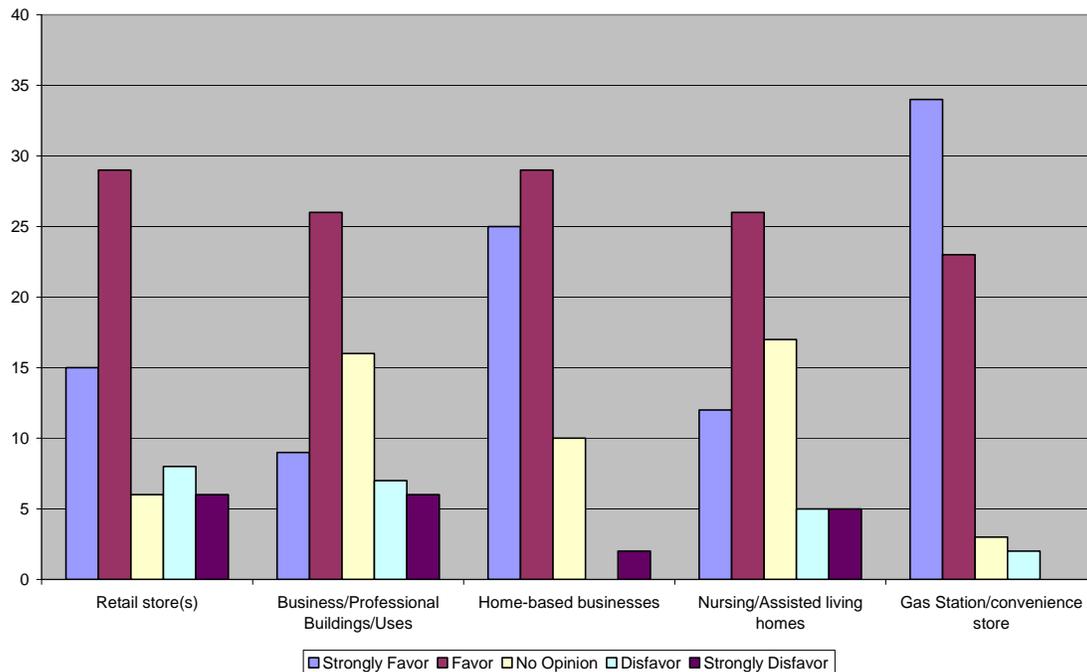
A wide variety of questions sought input on development types and opportunities. The following charts lump similar activities together to describe the range of opinion – from strongly favoring to strongly disfavoring – expressed by respondents. There were also some written comments provided on the surveys which are reproduced in Appendix A. All of the development associated with recreational facilities, recreational equipment sales and services, guiding and seasonal camping were strongly favored.

Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper?



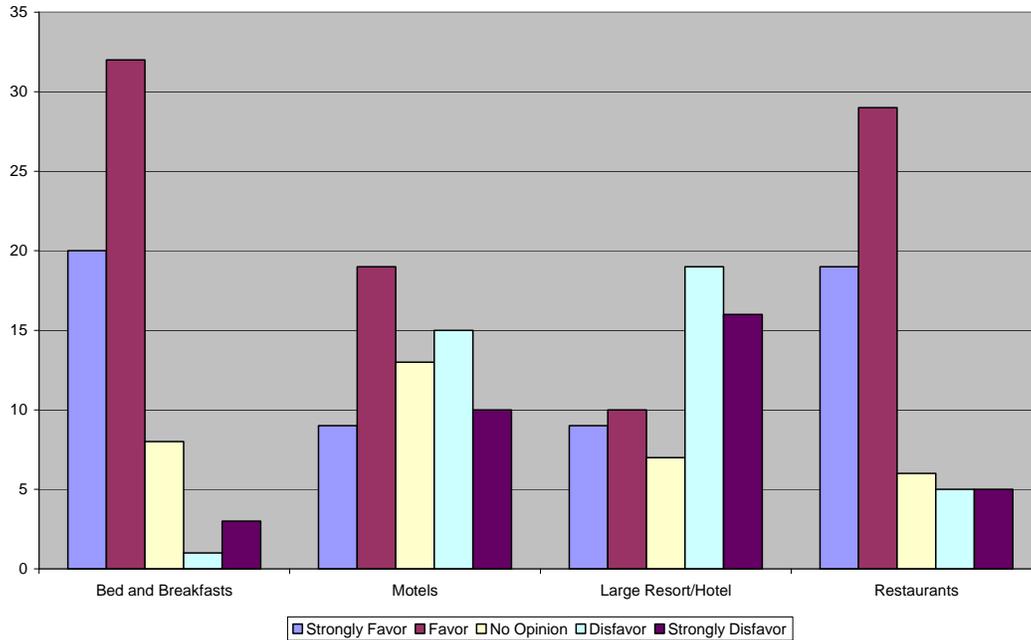
Home based businesses were especially supported as were providing an opportunity for professional business and some retail uses. Particularly supported was a gas station and convenience store.

Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper?



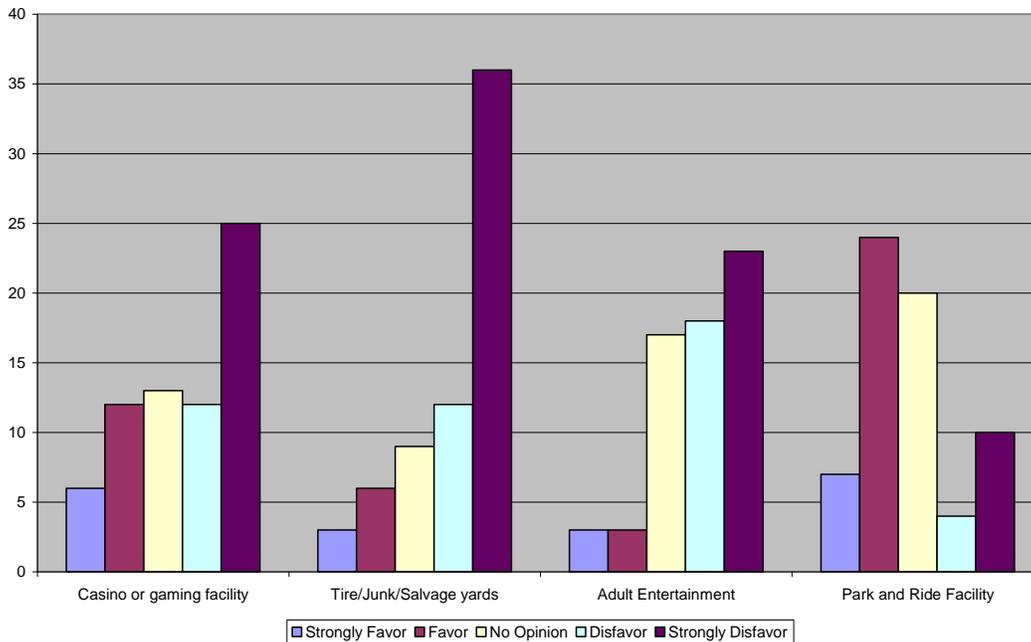
Respondents favor low scale tourism developments rather than large operations like resorts.

Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper?



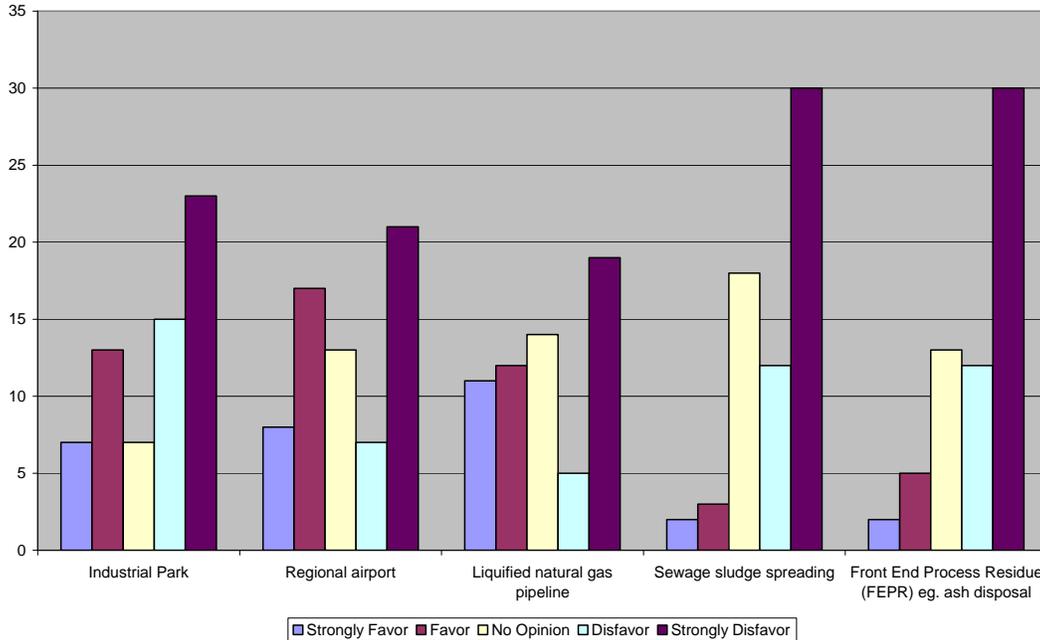
Casino and gaming facilities were not favored, nor were adult entertainment facilities. One of the most strongly disfavored activities was salvage and junk facilities.

Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper?



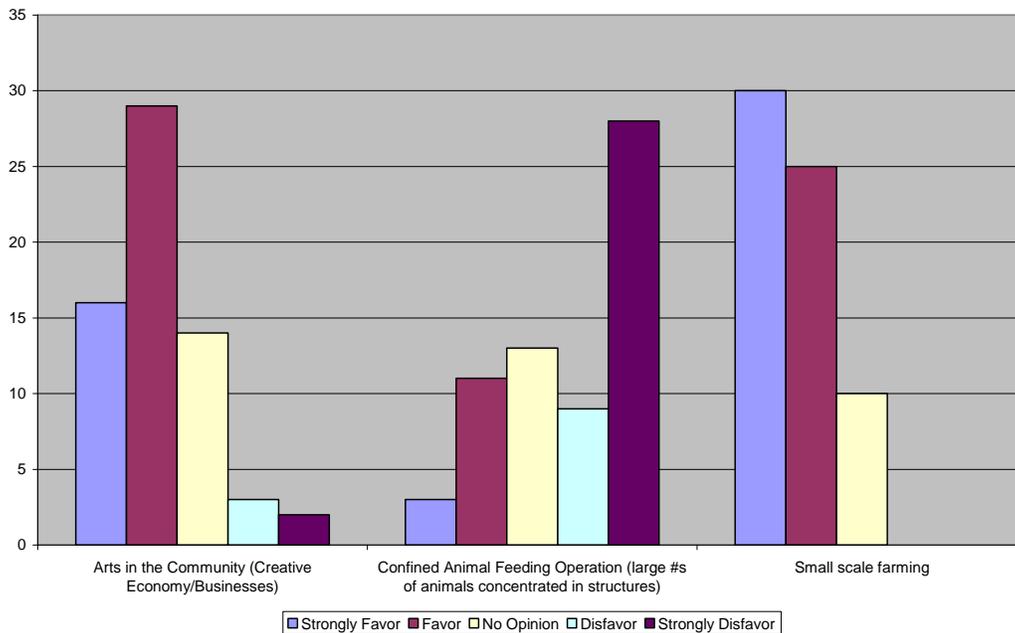
A park and ride facility was generally favored. Several of the types of activities proposed in recent years in the region, or often in rural areas in particular, were generally not favored. See also written comments in Appendix A.

Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper?



The written comments speak to a desire for small scale operations in keeping with the quiet rural nature of the town as did the responses to different types of agriculture.

Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper?

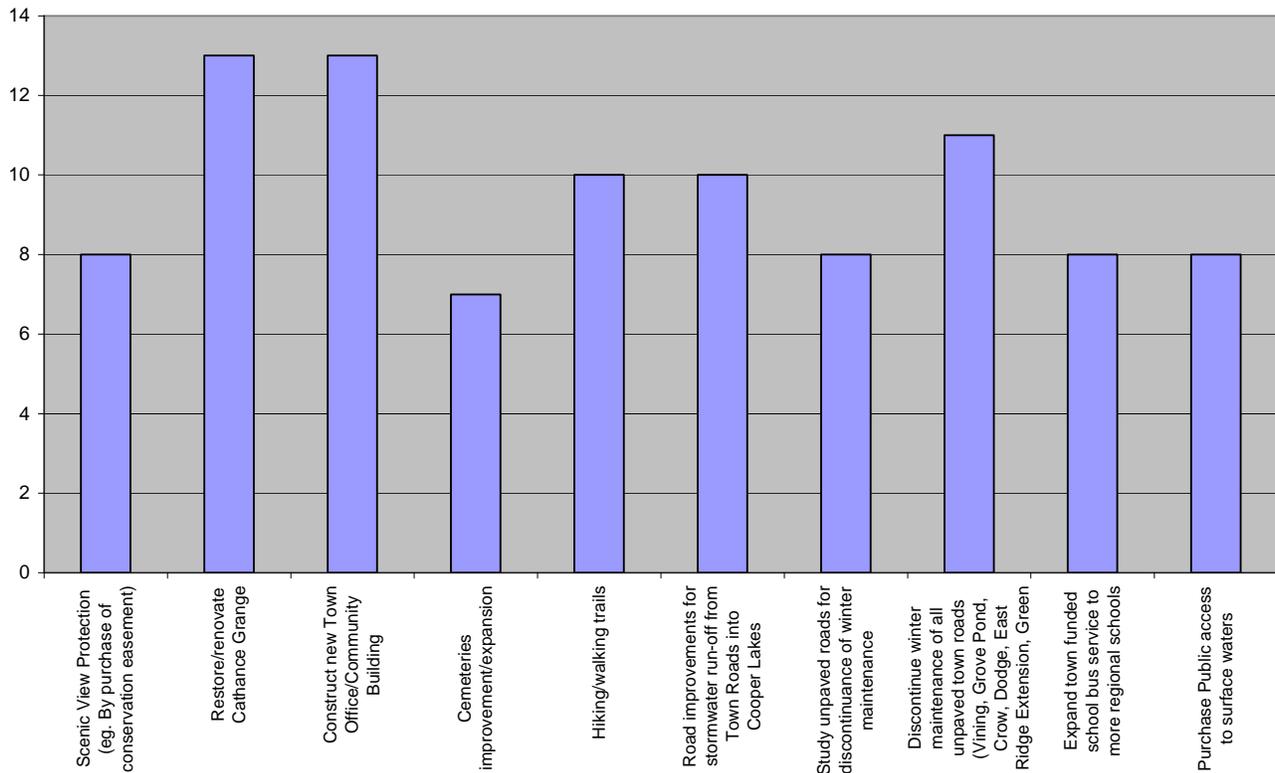


**Public Investments**

The next set of survey questions sought to understand how much taxpayers are prepared to spend or invest in their preservation priorities and in community services.

Respondents were asked how much they favored/disfavored investment in each item and then to choose 3 of their highest priorities. Priorities are presented first and then the relative importance of each investment is charted.

**Highest Priorities for Town \$ INVESTMENTS \$**



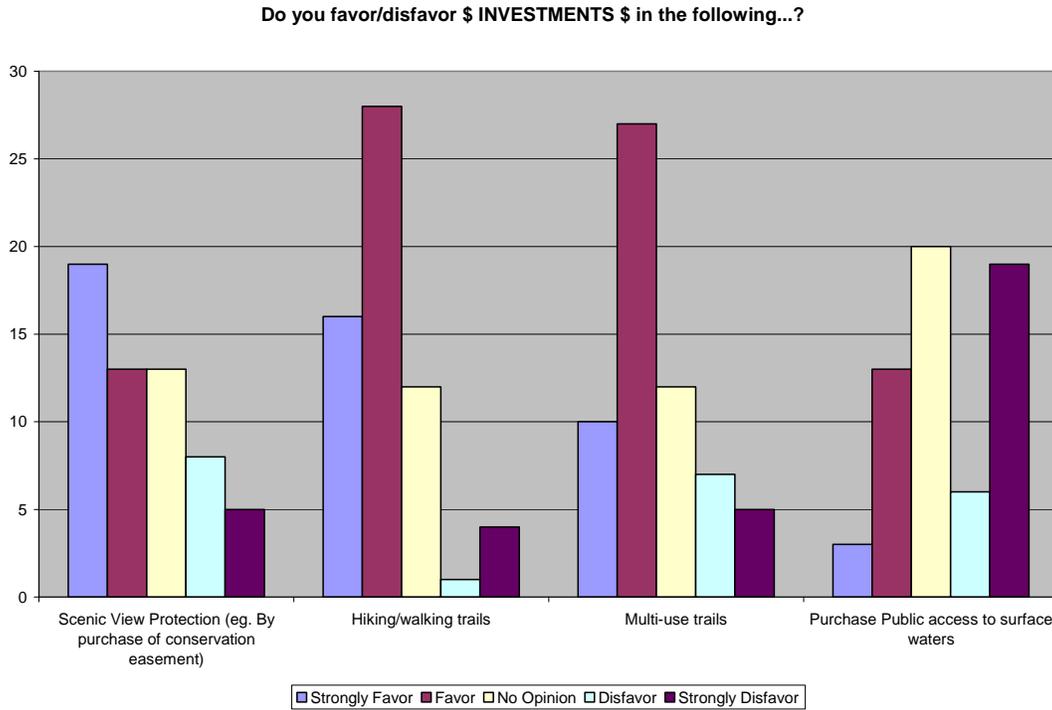
The two highest priorities to respondents (13 votes each) were restoration/renovation of the Cathance Grange and constructing a new town office/community building.

The next highest priority for town investments (11 votes) was to discontinue winter maintenance of all unpaved town roads.

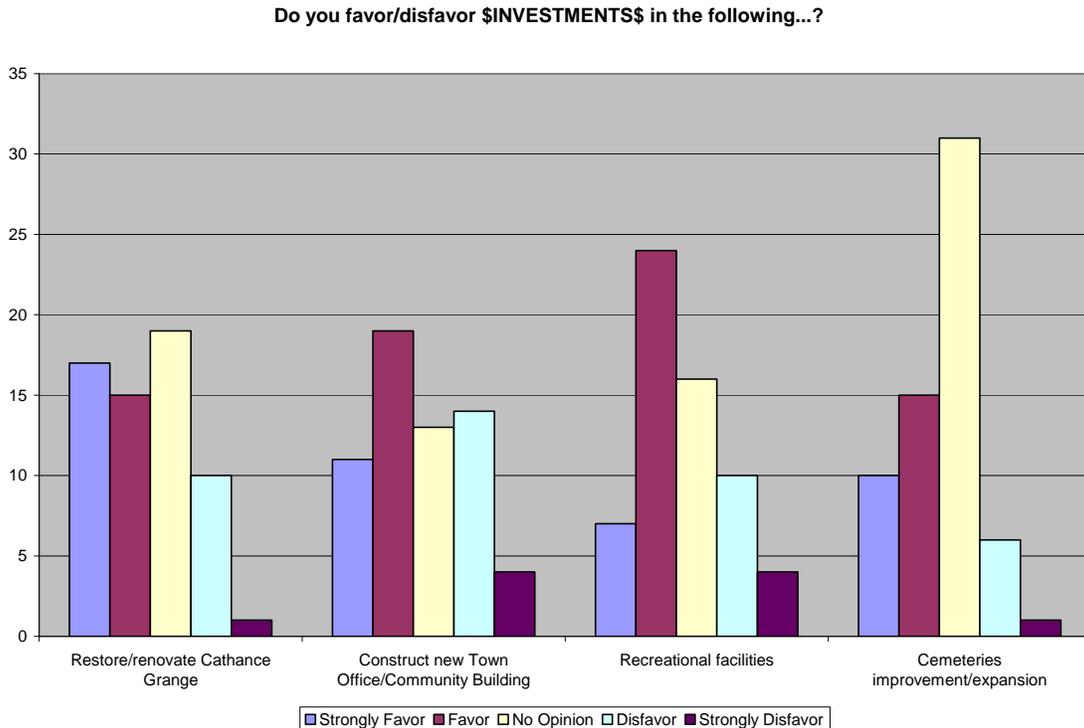
The next two highest priorities (10 votes each) for town investments were hiking/walking trails and road improvement for stormwater run-off from Town roads into Cooper Lakes.

Closely following (8 votes each) were scenic view protection, a study of unpaved roads for discontinuance of winter maintenance, expanding town funded school bus service to more regional schools and purchase of public access to surface waters.

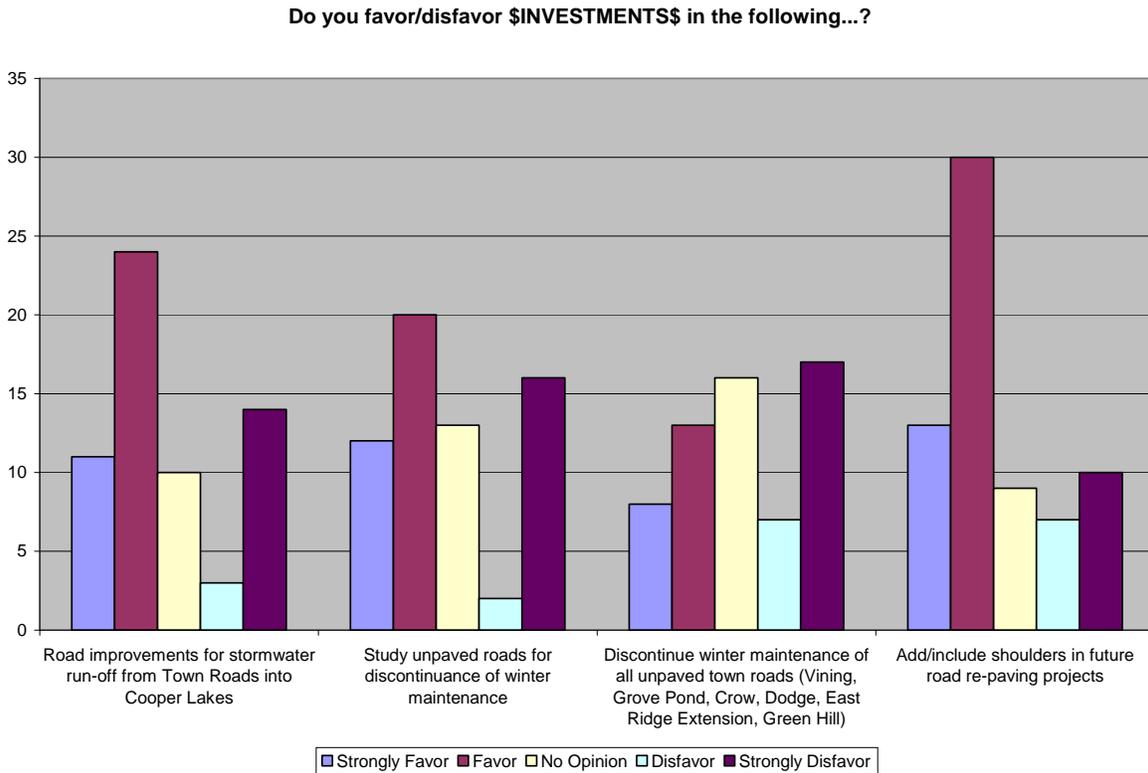
The following chart reveals the support for scenic view protection and trails. It also shows that while purchase of public access to surface waters was a high priority for many (as noted above), there were many who strongly disagreed with this kind of investment.



Support for investment in either the Cathance Grange or a new town office/community building is split. Many had no opinion on cemeteries presumably because it does not/will not affect them.



Opinions on investments for road improvements were varied. Adding shoulders was strongly supported as were improvements for stormwater run-off from town roads into Cooper Lakes. Again, while discontinuance of winter maintenance on unpaved road was supported (first as a study and secondarily as an action) there was also a fair amount of strong disagreement on this option.



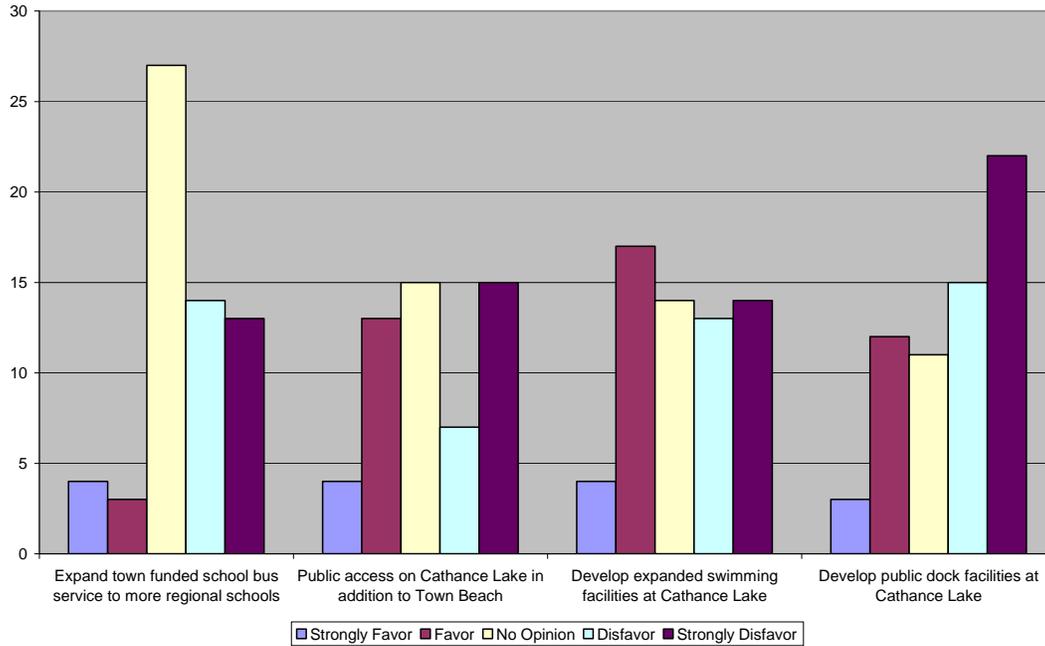
Investments in improvements on Cathance Lake were mixed. Expansion of public dock facilities are not generally supported. Additional public access is supported by some with somewhat lesser amounts of support for expanded swimming facilities on Cathance Lake.

Opinions on the expansion of town funded school bus service to more regional schools were primarily unfavorable. This appears to reveal a problem with the survey. The intent of the final column in the table on how the town should make investments was to identify priorities for expenditures.

However, it appears that some respondents marked those investments in the final column of the table not if they supported the investment but rather because they opposed the investment.

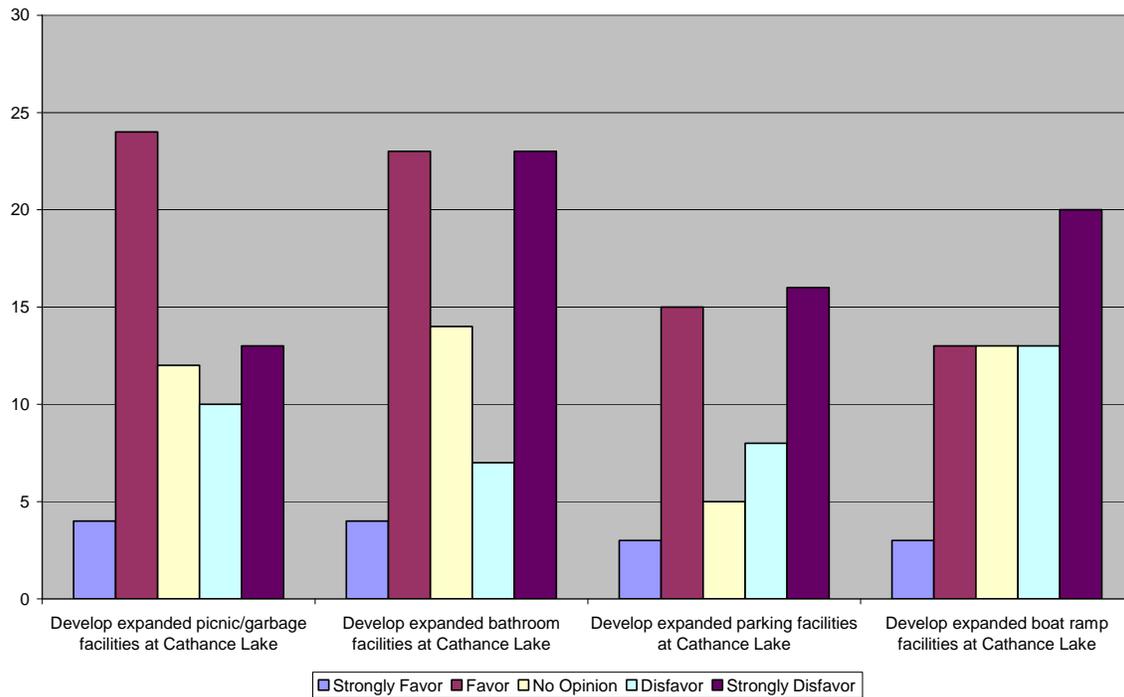
This disconnect between an investment that is not favored by some but is a priority investment overall appears to be repeated in the support (or lack of support for) discontinuing winter maintenance on all unpaved roads and purchase of public access to surface waters.

Do you favor/disfavor \$ INVESTMENTS \$ in the following...?



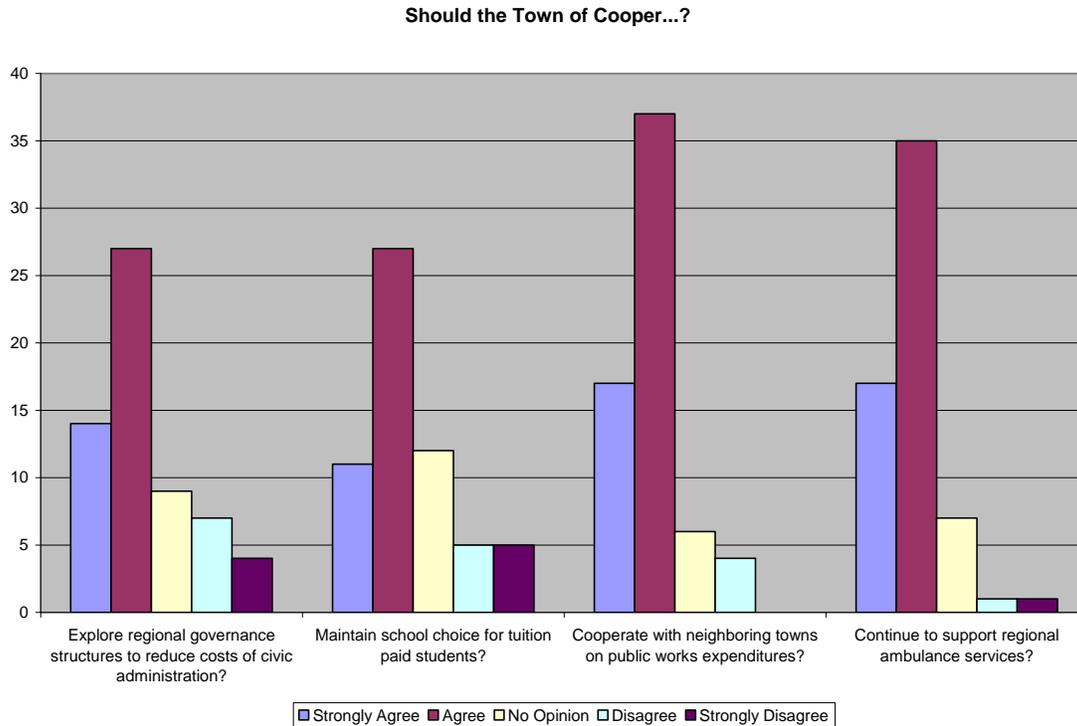
Opinions on expanding the facilities at Cathance Lake were very polarized. The strongest support exists for expanded picnic and garbage facilities.

Do you favor/disfavor \$ INVESTMENTS \$ in the following..?

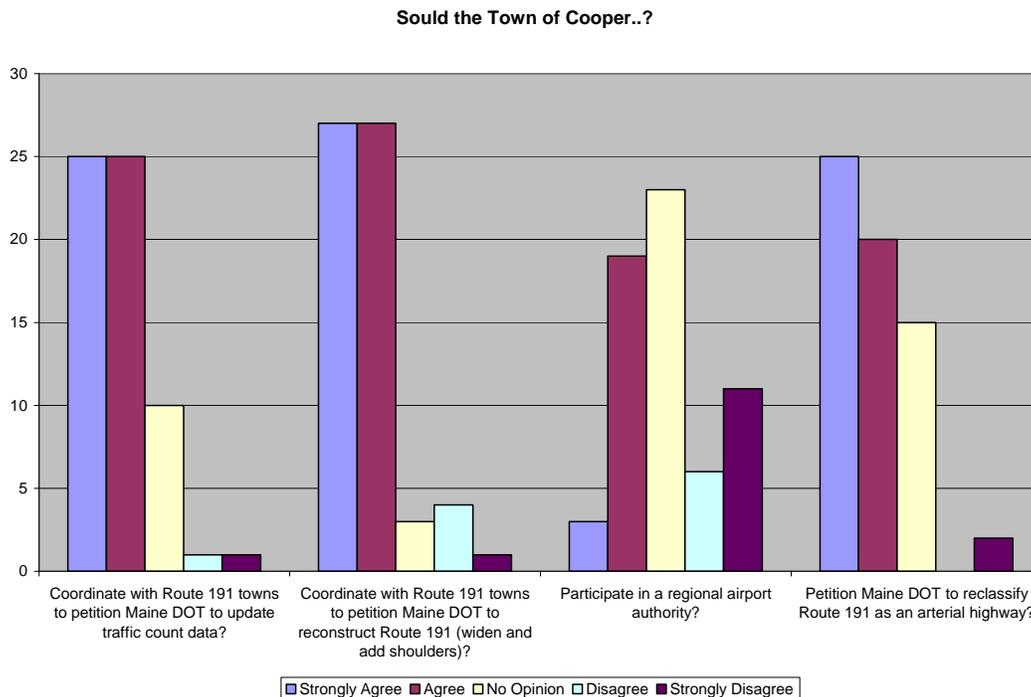


### Regionalization of Services

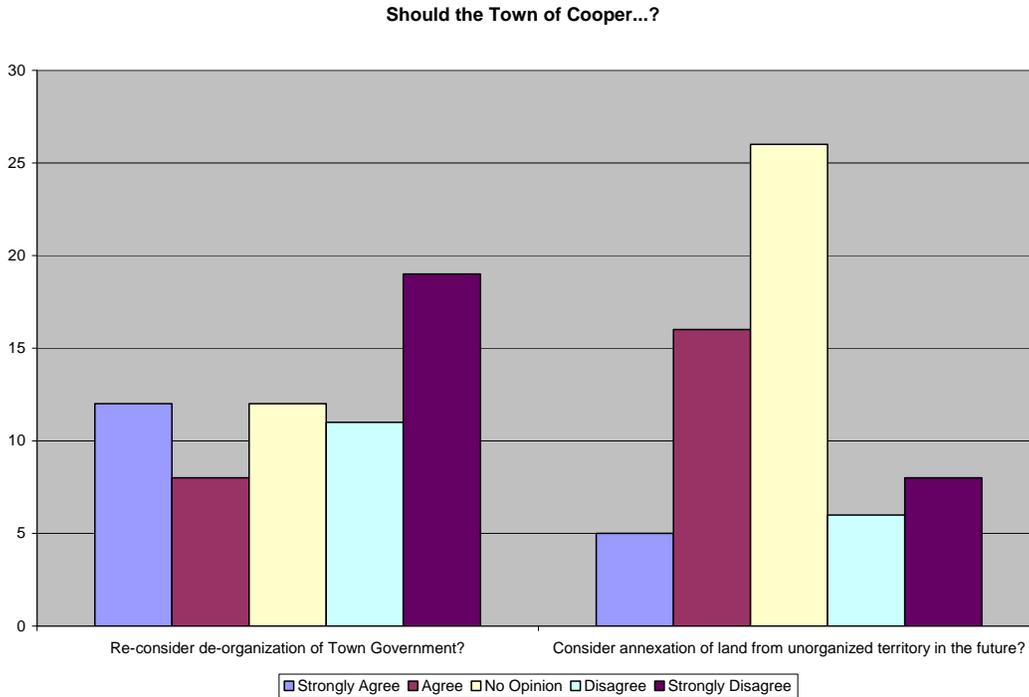
Opinions on regionalization were generally positive particularly for regional ambulance services.



Support for coordination among towns to seek ways to improve Route 191 was significant. Participation in a regional airport authority was polarized with many expressing no opinion perhaps because they did not understand what it means for the town.

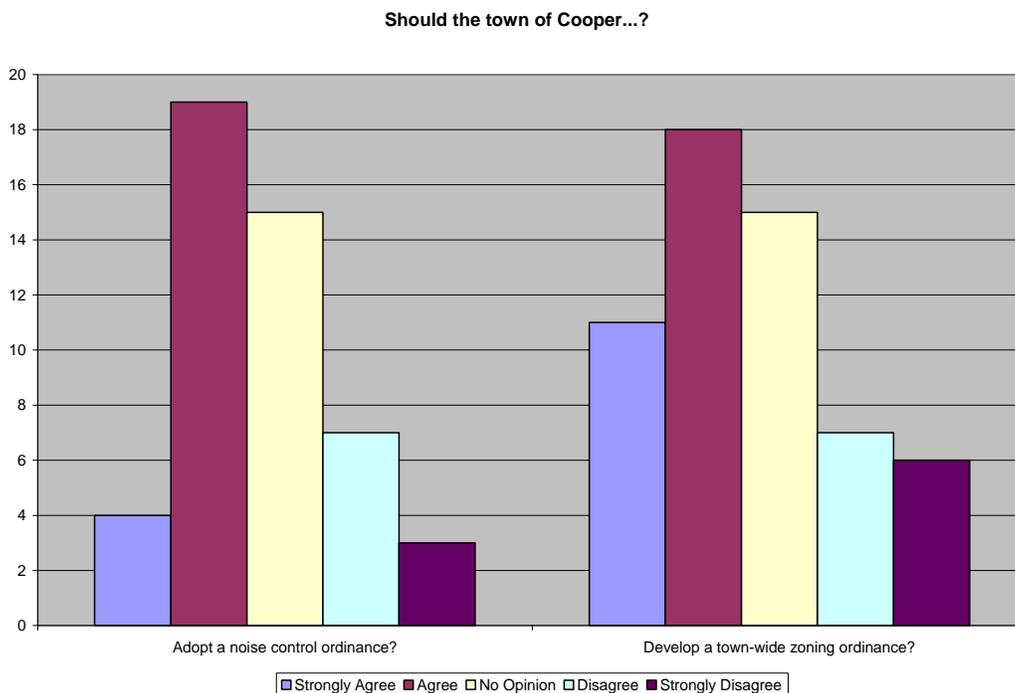


Re-consideration of the de-organization of town government did not have a majority of support though some still think it deserves consideration. Future annexation of land from unorganized territory received very mixed opinions with many expressing no opinion at all. Again, this may result from a lack of understanding of what such annexation would look like or mean for the town.



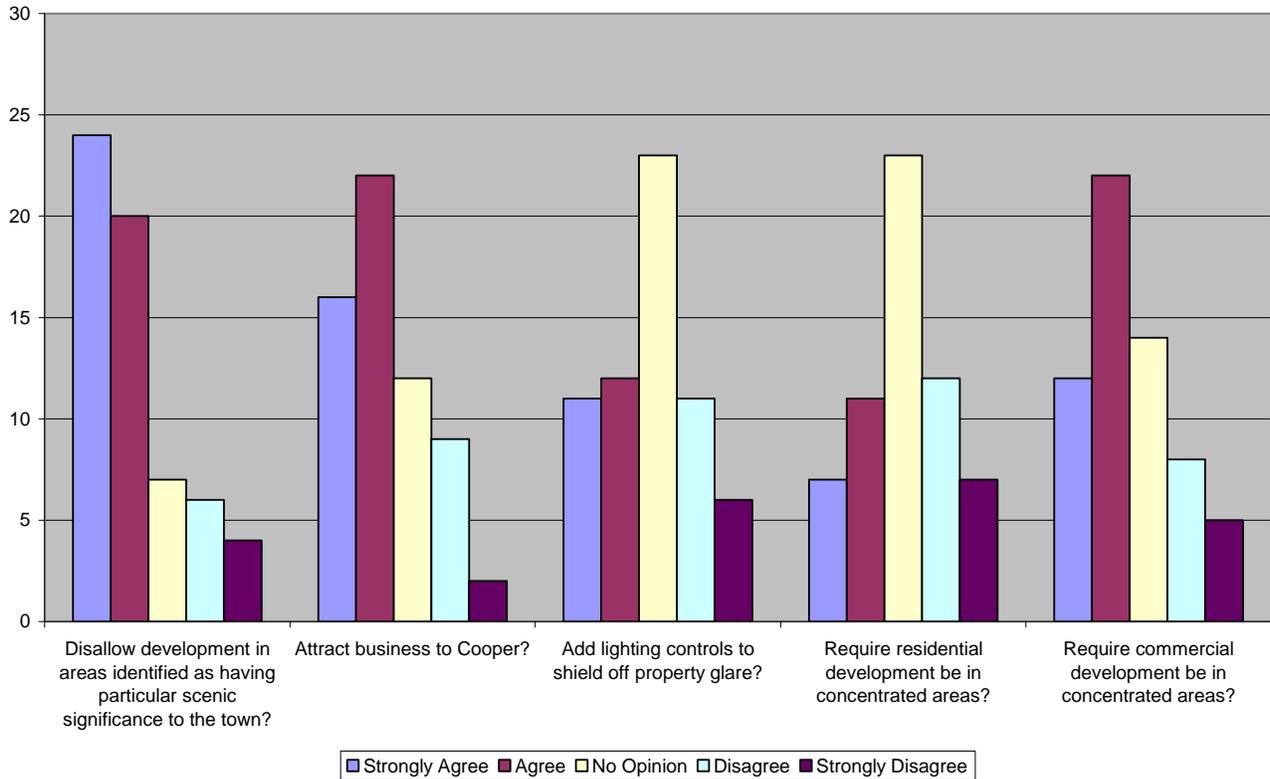
**Preservation, Planning and Land Use.**

Support for the development of both a zoning and a noise control ordinance was strong.



Specific provisions in a future zoning ordinance generated a range of opinions. Disallowing development in areas identified as having particular scenic significance was strongly supported. Including provisions that could attract business to Cooper was supported as was requiring that commercial development be in concentrated areas. Requiring residential development to be in concentrated areas was not supported nearly as much and many had no opinion on the idea. Many also had no opinion on adding lighting controls to shield off property glare.

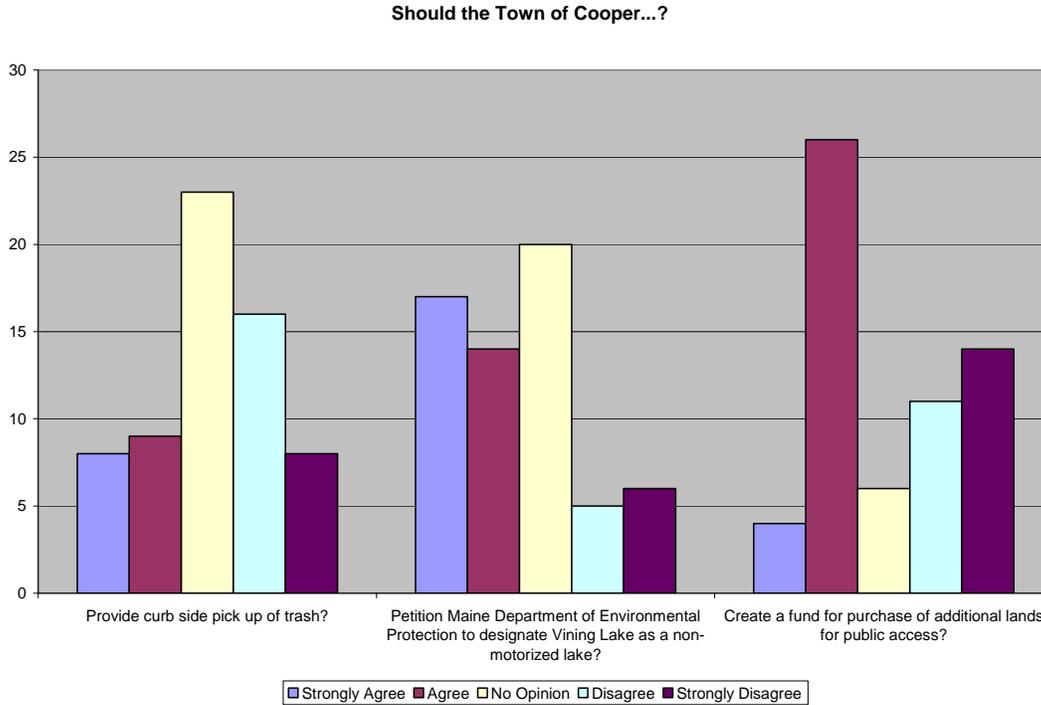
Should any future zoning ordinance include specific strategies to...?



Support for curb side pick up of trash was mixed though leaned toward unfavorable.

Many support a petition to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to designate Vining Lake as a non-motorized lake.

Creation of a fund for purchase of additional land for public access was highly polarized.



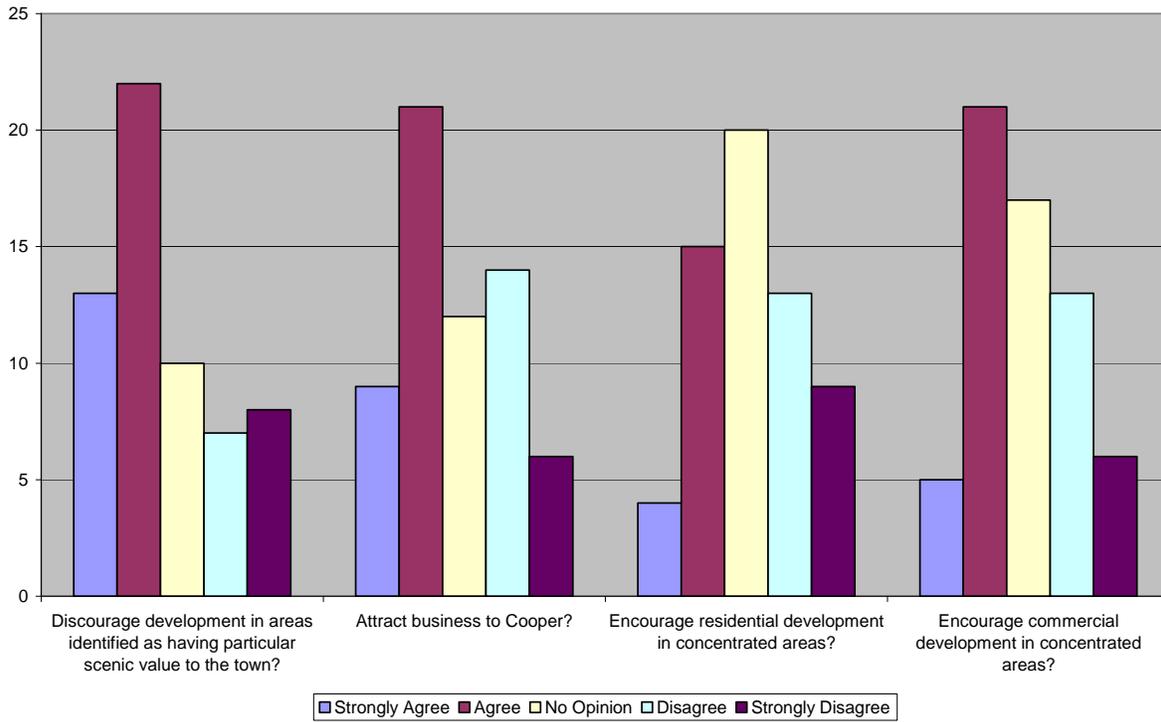
A similar set of questions were asked about whether incentives (vs. provisions of a future zoning ordinance) should be used to achieve the same ends.

Opinions were very similar for two of the provisions. Encouraging commercial development to be in concentrated areas through the use of incentives was generally favored but encouraging concentration of residential development was not with many expressing no opinion.

Opinions on the use of incentives to protect scenic areas were favorable but not as strongly favorable as using regulation to achieve this result.

Finally opinions on the use of incentives to attract business to Cooper were favorable (as with the use of zoning provisions to achieve the same end) but with many more expressing disfavor with the idea than through the use of regulation.

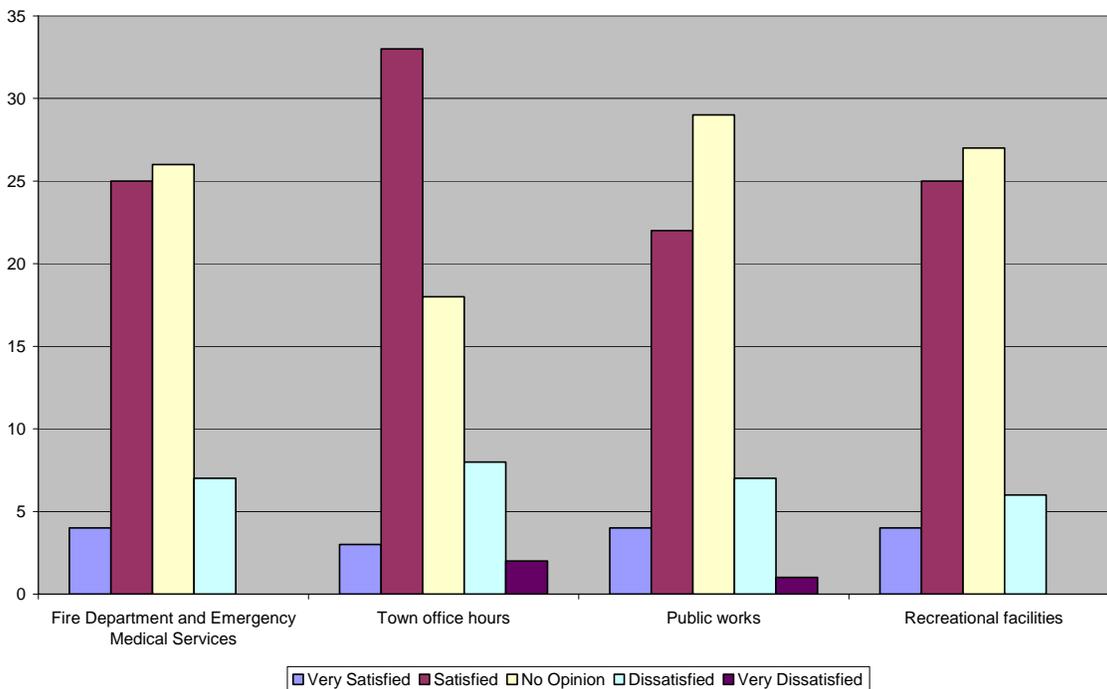
Should the town of Cooper offer tax and other incentives to...?



### C. Facilities and Services

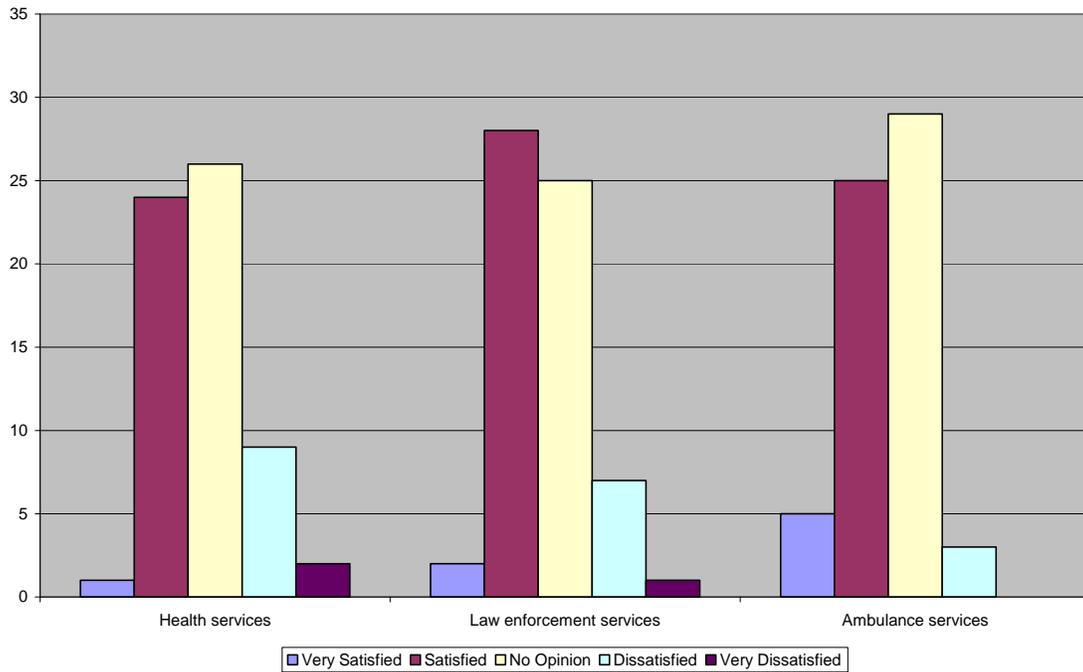
Respondents were generally satisfied with town services or had no opinion about them.

How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the following Town services?



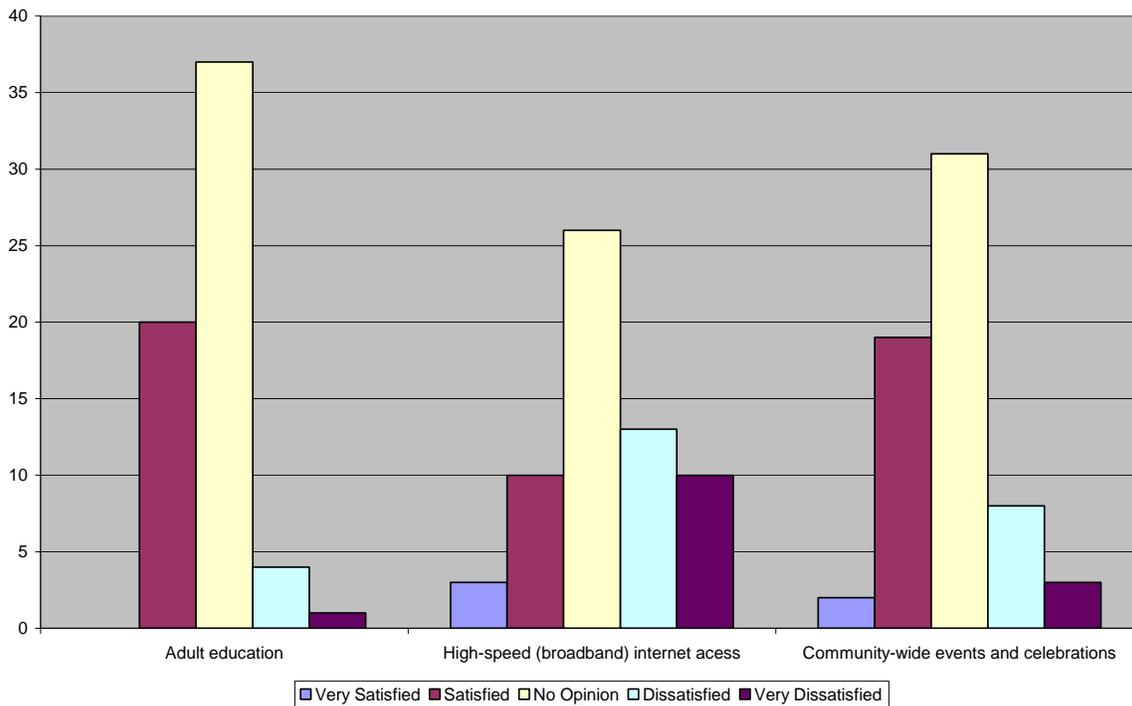
Respondents are also generally satisfied with community services or had no opinion.

How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the following community/regional services?



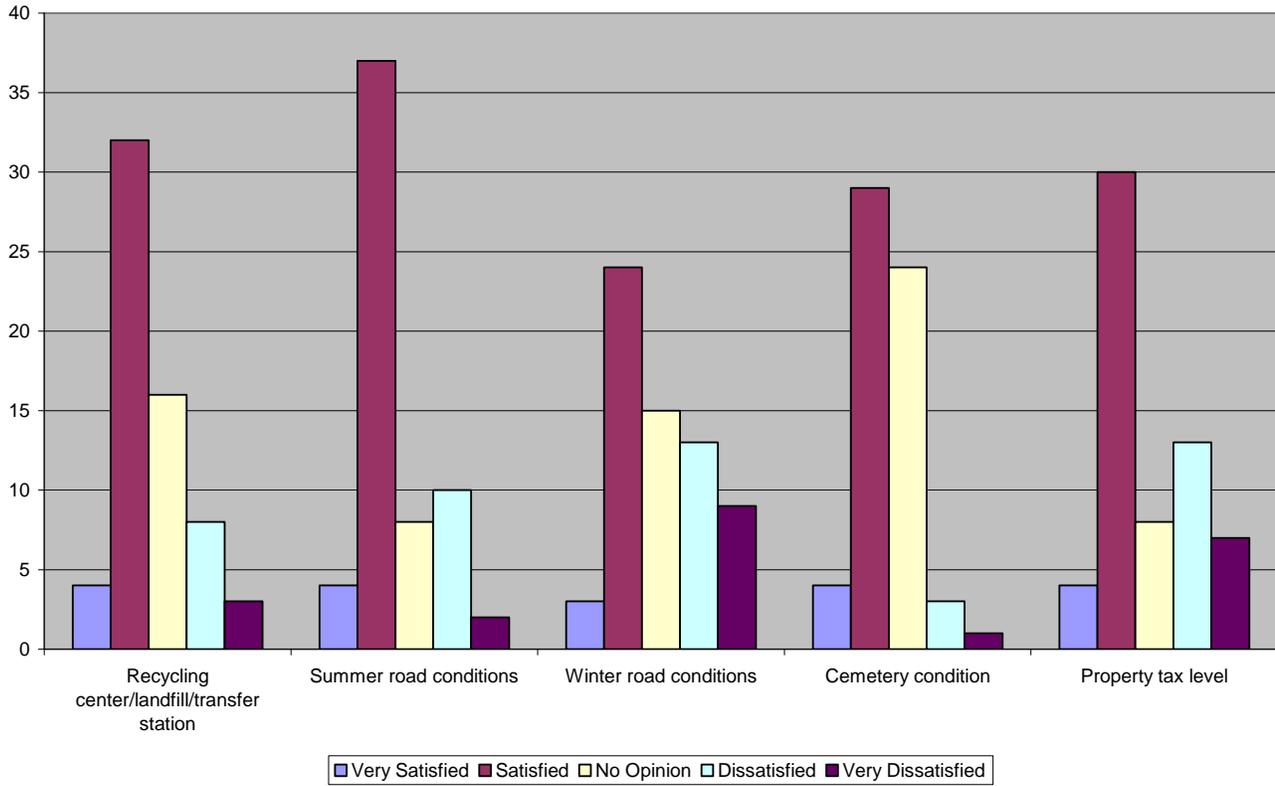
Respondents are also generally satisfied with other services while many are dissatisfied with the availability of high speed (broadband) internet access.

How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the following community/regional services?



Finally, respondents are generally satisfied with summer road conditions though they are less satisfied with winter road conditions. The condition of the cemeteries was found satisfactory by most as was the recycling center/landfill/transfer station though there were some who are strongly dissatisfied with it. Additional written comments are also included in Appendix A. Most are satisfied with the property tax level though there were many who were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied.

How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the following...?



**SUMMARY**

In early 2009 Cooper residents completed a survey to give their views on important aspects of the town’s future. The participation rate was high (29.6% response rate) for surveys of this type and included a great deal of written input.

Questions on housing in the survey were focused on the types of strategies towns can implement to make housing more affordable to residents. Respondents generally did not favor dimensional regulations that allowed greater density. Neither did they favor areas in growth areas for mobile home parks though opinions were not as strong against this concept as they were against regulatory options. Respondents do favor allowing accessory apartments and participating in a regional affordable housing coalition. Opinions were mixed on creating a community affordable housing committee.

On questions about desired types of economic activity respondents strongly supported home based businesses. Also supported were professional business and some retail uses. All of the development

associated with recreational facilities, recreational equipment sales and services, guiding and seasonal camping were strongly favored. Casino and gaming facilities were not favored, nor were adult entertainment facilities. Consistent with this sentiment, respondents favor low scale tourism developments rather than large operations like resorts. One of the most strongly disfavored activities was salvage and junk facilities. Particularly supported was a gas station and convenience store. The written comments speak to a desire for small scale operations in keeping with the quiet rural nature of the town as did the responses to different types of agriculture.

Several questions asked about local roads and transportation. Respondents are generally satisfied with summer road conditions though they are less satisfied with winter road conditions. Opinions on investments for road improvements were varied. Adding shoulders was strongly supported as were improvements for stormwater run-off from town roads into Cooper Lakes. Support for coordination among towns to seek ways to improve Route 191 was significant.

Respondents were asked how much they favored/disfavored investment in their preservation priorities and in community services and then to choose 3 of their highest priorities. In summary the two highest were restoration/renovation of the Cathance Grange and constructing a new town office/community building. The next highest priority for town investments was to discontinue winter maintenance of all unpaved town roads.

Respondents were generally satisfied with town and regional/community services or had no opinion about them. Respondents are also generally satisfied with other services while many are dissatisfied with the availability of high speed (broadband) internet access. The condition of the cemeteries was found satisfactory by most as was the recycling center/landfill/transfer station though there were some who are strongly dissatisfied with it. Most are satisfied with the property tax level though there were many who were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied.

Respondents to the survey expressed support for the town to prevent uncontrolled development through development of a zoning ordinance and a noise control ordinance. Specific provisions in a future zoning ordinance generated a range of opinions. Disallowing development in areas identified as having particular scenic significance was strongly supported. Including provisions that could attract business to Cooper was supported as was requiring that commercial development be in concentrated areas. Requiring residential development to be in concentrated areas was not supported nearly as much and many had no opinion on the idea. Many also had no opinion on adding lighting controls to shield off property glare.

Opinions on regionalization were generally positive particularly for regional ambulance services. Support for coordination among towns to seek ways to improve Route 191 was significant. Participation in a regional airport authority was polarized with many expressing no opinion perhaps because they did not understand what it means for the town. Re-consideration of the de-organization of town government did not have a majority of support though some still think it deserves consideration. Future annexation of land from unorganized territory received very mixed opinions with many expressing no opinion at all. Again, this may result from a lack of understanding of what such annexation would look like or mean for the town.

## **L. REGIONAL COORDINATION**

The town of Cooper is situated approximately 100 miles east of Bangor and is bordered on the north by the towns of Alexander and Crawford, on the east by the towns of Meddybemps and Charlotte, and on the west and south by the unorganized territories of Berry Township, Cathance Township (formerly Townships 19 and 14 respectively) and Township 19. Commercial retail activity in Machias, Calais, and Bangor attracts Cooper residents as consumers and for work.

Comprehensive planning recognizes the importance of regional cooperation. The land uses in one community can impact another community, particularly when that land use is located near the boundaries of the town. Charlotte and Alexander have a locally adopted Comprehensive Plan that is consistent with state law; neither Crawford nor Meddybemps have prepared a Comprehensive Plan. None of the adjoining towns have adopted town wide zoning. The unorganized territories have land use functions administered by the Maine Land Use Regulatory Commission (LURC).

Cooper has included analyses of regional issues in the areas of transportation, economic development, public facilities and natural resources management. Cooper will attempt to develop compatible transportation, economic development and resource protection standards with nearby communities.

### **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

#### **Roads**

As communities with limited employment and services, Cooper residents must travel to other communities for the majority of their shopping and employment. The town is a small “bedroom” community with a significant portion of Route 191 that serves as both “Main St.” and a regional collector road. Cooper is dominated by the condition of Route 191 and the considerable amount of heavy truck traffic using it on a daily basis. It is considered “unbuilt” in transportation engineering terms and is in terrible condition throughout the town. There are dozens of long stretches of multiple longitudinal fissures in the road surface that are 4-8 inches wide and, in some cases, 6-8 inches deep. This issue affects businesses, the overall safety and convenience of residents, as well as property values.

Transportation linkages in Cooper consist primarily of State Route 191 which runs in a north-south direction in the southwestern corner of town before bending and running in an east-west direction to the eastern boundary with Meddybemps. Although the population of Washington County has decreased modestly during the 1990s, MDOT states that the total number of vehicle miles traveled in our County has increased by over 13 percent. Most roads are not congested now, but there is a need to protect them from future degradation and the significant taxpayer expense of adding remedial capacity. The town should ensure that access management standards are used to keep the Level of Service (LOS) on Route 191 from deteriorating.

It is important that Cooper continue to participate in regional transportation planning efforts. Municipalities can cooperate with neighboring communities and regional committees (eg. Corridor Planning initiatives) to formulate corridor management plans that seek to encourage residential, commercial and industrial development with entrances and driveways co-located and with the needed road improvements paid for by the developer. Corridor management plans outline the appropriate locations for such access management techniques as frontage roads, shared driveways, intersections, turn lanes and signals.

### **Public Transportation**

There are no public transit facilities in town. The Washington Hancock Community Agency (WHCA) provides scheduled van and door-to-door on demand transportation from our town to Machias, Ellsworth and Bangor for clients referred to them by the State of Maine Department of Human Services. These services are provided to income-eligible persons and are typically children in state custody, welfare clients, Medicaid patients with medical appointments, the elderly and disabled, or people needing transportation to Meals for Me. Most of the longer trips are for medical services: shorter trips are to local doctors, pharmacies and groceries. Users of this service are mostly families living below poverty level, people with mobility limitations, people with one or no available vehicles, and the elderly.

West Coastal Connection Bus Service offers daily service from Calais to Bangor, round trip. West also operates services three times weekly, connecting coastal communities to Ellsworth and coordinating its schedule with other service providers. Pick-up points are at various locations throughout the county.

### **Airports**

There are no airports or public airfields within town. Private planes can land on Cathance Lake and provide private air service. Primary regional airports include:

1. Bangor International Airport, provides national and international commercial passenger and freight services, as well as civil defense operations. 11,441-foot main runway. Car rental services are available.
2. Deblois Flight Strip, off State Route 193, has a 4,000-foot runway but no beacon or fueling services. Last rated by the state in poor condition.
3. Eastport Municipal Airport has a 4000-foot runway and provides limited charter and instructional services. Beacon and fueling services. Last rated by the state in good condition.
4. Hancock County - Bar Harbor Airport in Trenton is the nearest airport with regularly scheduled passenger commercial service. In addition to daily commuter service to Boston, Massachusetts, charter service is offered. Car rental services are available. 5,200-foot main runway.
5. Lubec Municipal Airport has a 2032-foot gravel/turf runway, with beacon, but no fueling services. Last rated by the state in good condition.
6. Machias Valley Airport has a 2909-foot runway and is used by private plane owners and in an emergency, by air ambulance services. Beacon, but no fueling services. Last rated by the state in good condition.
7. Princeton Municipal Airport has two runways, the larger of which is 3999 feet, and is used primarily by private businesses and recreational fliers. Beacon, but no fueling services. Last rated by the state in poor condition.

**Railroad Facilities and Rail Services**

The former Maine Central Railroad line runs through unorganized territory and towns to the south and east of Cooper, however it is exempt. Abandoned rail lines stretch across Washington County and are generally in poor condition, as passenger service stopped nearly fifty years ago and freight service stopped in the mid-1980s. Recent efforts by the state have been made to create recreational trails along abandoned rail lines and rights-of-way through our County. The Downeast Sunrise Trail is an 80-mile multi-use trail that is nearing completion for use on the exempt Calais Branch of the rail line corridor from Ellsworth to Ayers Junction. The Management Plan for the Calais Branch specifies that if rail becomes a feasible use of the corridor then the Downeast Sunrise trail will no longer be the primary use of the corridor. The East Coast Greenway is a bicycle and walking trail planned to extend from Key West, Florida to Calais, Maine, which may use some rail line rights-of-way. There are efforts to expand freight rail service in Washington County, particularly in the Calais and Eastport areas with connections to the PanAm lines that cross into Canada and back into Maine to reach the western part of the state across the Route 6 corridor in northern Washington County. Passenger rail service in the State has been given a boost recently with the reinstatement of passenger service between Boston and Portland.

**Ports**

There are no port facilities in our town. The deep water Port of Eastport is the closest port. It has two piers, three berths, with a low tide depth of 40 feet, and over 75,000 square feet of covered storage. The outer berth can accommodate a ship up to 900 feet in length. There is also a municipal breakwater for use by smaller vessels.

**REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

Cooper is tied into the regional economy of Washington and Hancock counties. Because of its reliance on service center communities like Calais, Machias and, to some extent, Bangor for the majority of goods and services it residents use, fluctuations in the region's economy directly affect the well-being of Cooper residents.

Recent closures of the Louisiana Pacific plant and the closure/re-opening of the Domtar mill, both in Woodland, affected residents in Cooper. Responses to these shifts vary and include retraining, returning to school, taking early retirement and doing other related work. Some younger workers are leaving the area but many of all ages remain. Many are simply travelling further for employment and working several jobs.

**REGIONAL NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES**

The town of Cooper shares the shoreline of Cathance Lake with the neighboring unorganized territory of Cathance Township. There are several small watersheds in Cooper depicted on Map 4, almost all of which drain toward the Dennys River. The exceptions are small portions of the upper watersheds of Seavey Brook and three small lakes in Berry Township which are part of the headwaters of the East Machias River. Vining Lake is another small headwater lake that drains into the East Machias watershed. As well, Fifteenth Stream traverses the northeast corner of Cooper and drains into Meddybemps Lake which is hydrologically connected to both the Dennys and the St Croix Rivers.

Howe Brook Mill Stream, flowing out of Mill Pond and the streams know as Big Inlet and Little Inlet all drain into Cathance Lake which ultimately reaches the Dennys River in Cathance Township. Dead Stream and Splinter Brook drain directly into the upper reaches of the Dennys River which forms the border between Cooper and the neighboring town of Charlotte.

Cathance Lake is managed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as a coldwater fishery. It is actively supported by the Cathance Lake Association with members from Cooper and Cathance Township. The Maine DEP and the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) have collaborated in the collection of lake data to evaluate present water quality, track algae blooms, and determine water quality trends.

There are no mapped aquifers with potential yields greater than 10 gallons per minute in the town of Cooper. However, certain local wells do yield between 10-50 gallons per minute. A mapped aquifer with potential yields of 10-50 gallons per minute is located in neighboring Meddybemps under the large blueberry heath located on either side of Route 191. Except for blueberry fields scattered along the major roads through town, the majority of these watersheds are forested.

The Natural Areas Program is administered by the State Department of Conservation whose job it is to document Rare and Unique Botanical Features. These include the habitat of rare, threatened, or endangered plant species and unique or exemplary natural communities.

There is one “Rare and Exemplary Community” (see Natural Resources chapter) documented in Cooper along its border with the town of Charlotte (formed by the Dennys River). It is known as a Stream Shore Ecosystem, a group of communities bordering and directly influenced by the open-water portion of a stream (first order through third or fourth order) and includes vegetated aquatic communities as well as the emergent and bordering communities.

Cooper also contains one Focus Area of Statewide Significance. It is part of what is called the Meddybemps Heath, a 2,500 acre heath that is the second largest domed bog ecosystem in the Eastern Coastal and Eastern Interior regions. Meddybemps Heath lies at the southwest side of Meddybemps Lake where Sixteenth and Fifteenth Streams converge at the lakeshore. It is contained within the three towns of Alexander, Cooper and Meddybemps. It is a large peatland embedded with remnant geologic features including an elongate esker that separates much of the lake from the interior of the bog.

Finally, the upper reaches of the Dennys River form part of the eastern boundary of the town of Cooper. The Atlantic Salmon Commission has protected the land adjoining the River where there are extensive wetlands within Cooper (see Maps 2, 4 and 7).

## **REGIONAL PUBLIC FACILITIES ISSUES**

Within the town, there is one beach operated for town taxpayers, residents and their guests providing fresh-water access to Cathance Lake. It is depicted on Map 2, Cooper Public Facilities and Transportation. There are several additional traditional access points that traverse private land in the town of Cooper. There are three public boat launches providing access to Cathance Lake in Cathance Township, one fully ramped boat launch on Route 191 and two carry-in access points at the south end of the Lake.

Cooper has no Town Office. The Town Clerk and Tax Collector operate from their homes. The roads commissioner also operates from his home. Meetings of Boards and Committees are conducted in the Cathance Grange during all but the worst winter weather when the Grange parking lot is not plowed. Selectmen's meetings are held at the home of the Tax Collector. Between the years of 2008-2010 Cooper cooperated with the adjoining town of Alexander to construct a municipal records storage addition to the Alexander Municipal Building. The storage area is climate controlled and fire proof. Records from Cooper were moved into the facility in the Spring of 2010.

Cooper residents dispose of their solid waste at the Marion Transfer Station. The refuse is then carried to New Brunswick or the PERC1 facility in Orrington. Demolition debris is also taken to the Marion site. Towns using the Marion facility are exploring options for a construction and demolition disposal site with neighboring towns. According to the State Planning Office the Marion Users Transfer Station (Charlotte, Cooper, Cutler, Dennysville, East Machias, Machiasport, Meddybemps, Northfield, Pembroke, Perry, Robbinston, Wesley, Whiting, Edmonds, Marion, No. 14 Twp, Trescott, T19 ED BPP, T18 ED BPP) had a 15.16% recycling rate in 2006.

Public safety and services for Cooper is provided by the Washington County Sheriffs' Office and the Maine State Police. The Washington County Sheriffs Department provides the dispatching services for emergency services with non-emergency routing through Orono. Cooper receives first responder volunteer ambulance service by the Alexander Fire Department. Downeast EMS provides full ambulance transportation to area hospitals.

The town of Cooper is a member of School Union 107 (to be named pursuant to an Alternative Organizational Structure in 2010) which also includes the towns of Meddybemps, Princeton, Baileyville, Grand Lake Stream, and Crawford. Each town has elected school committees that oversee school affairs.

Grades K-8 have the option to attend the Alexander Elementary School, Woodland Elementary, Rose Gaffney in Machias, or to the Elm St Elementary in East Machias. Transportation however is only provided to those attending Alexander or Woodland. High school students may attend any of the regional high schools (Calais, Shead, Washington Academy, Woodland, Machias Memorial) but bussing is provided only to Woodland. School bus services are combined with Meddybemps to reduce costs for both towns.

Recreational resources in Washington County have an impact on the local and regional economy. Tourist-related businesses that rely on the recreational opportunities are significant sources of income to many towns in the area. In Cooper, some businesses benefit in part from an influx of tourists and second home owners to the region, especially during the summer.

Regional recreation facilities accessible to Cooper's residents and to visitors include wildlife refuges, parks, golf courses, picnic areas, public access to surface waters, and hiking and snowmobile trails.

### **Public Survey**

Opinions on regionalization were generally positive particularly for regional ambulance services.

---

1 Penobscot Energy Recovery Center

Support for coordination among towns to seek ways to improve Route 191 was significant. Participation in a regional airport authority was polarized with many expressing no opinion perhaps because they did not understand what it means for the town. Re-consideration of the de-organization of town government did not have a majority of support though some still think it deserves consideration. Future annexation of land from unorganized territory received very mixed opinions with many expressing no opinion at all. Again, this may result from a lack of understanding of what such annexation would look like or mean for the town.

## **SUMMARY**

Cooper has a long history of cooperation with adjoining towns and multiple towns in the region. This activity is strongest in the sharing of public facilities and municipal services as the cost savings are often most clearly realized in these areas. Cooper is very active on regional committees and authorities dealing with solid waste, emergency response, watershed management and economic development. These activities will continue with a strong emphasis on regional transportation policy, facilities sharing and infrastructure development (high speed broadband Internet in particular).

## M. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION – POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

As required by Chapter 208, Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, this section provides a separate section that prioritizes how implementation strategies will be carried out and identifies the responsible party and anticipated timeline for each strategy in the plan.

<b>HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will preserve the State's historic and archeological resources for future generations to enjoy and pass on to their children as they have been passed on to the present.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Protect and preserve known archaeological and historic sites.	Promote awareness of historic structures and artifacts including the consideration of listing on the National Register of Historic Places.	Planning Board	On-going
	Work in cooperation with the State of Maine with any of the identified historical and archaeological resources within Cooper.	Planning Board; Select Board	As funding allows
	Form a Cooper Historical Society; cooperate with Alexander, Crawford, and Charlotte	Interested citizens	Short Term
Ensure that archeological and historic sites are not unknowingly destroyed.	Potential areas and artifacts of historical and archaeological significance, especially along riverbanks and lakeshores, should be professionally surveyed and documented, and historical and archaeological sites and artifacts should be monitored	Select Board; Planning Board	As funding allows
Formulate guidelines or land use controls to protect and preserve historic and archaeological resources if identified.	Require developers to provide evidence that proposed developments will not negatively impact any archeological sites.	Planning Board	Immediate
	Require that development plans include a plan showing the preservation of known historically significant areas.	Planning Board	Immediate

<b>POPULATION</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will use complete and current information about their population when making administrative and policy decisions for the town.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Cooper will actively monitor the size, characteristics and distribution of its population.	The town will seek assistance in the collection and maintenance of census data from the Washington County Council of Governments, the designated census information center for Washington County.	Town Clerk; WCCOG	On-going
	Data gathered will include population estimates, census data and other information concerning the number and characteristics of the town's population including shifts of existing seasonal housing and residents to year-round status.	Town Clerk; WCCOG	On-going
	The town will encourage full participation in the 2010 census.	Town Clerk; WCCOG	On-going

<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will protect and preserve the natural resources on which its economy and quality of life depend.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Water Quality and Water Resources</b>			
Protect water quality	Update Shoreland Zoning Regulations and prepare a zoning ordinance to maintain compliance with State and Federal regulations and reflect the local needs of the community including such provisions as the following on Cooper Lakes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforce buffers along lake shores</li> <li>• Increase zoning lot sizes</li> <li>• Limit commercial development on the lakes</li> <li>• Limit commercial development on the lakes</li> </ul>	Planning Board; Selectmen	2008
	Petition Maine DEP to develop phosphorous allocations for Vining Lake	Planning Board	Immediate
	Develop regulations that reduce impacts of motorized water craft: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore limiting the size/#/horsepower of boats</li> <li>• Explore limitations on use of jet skis on the lakes</li> </ul>	Planning Board; Selectmen	2008-2009
	Use land protection options (land trusts, purchase with Land for Maine's Future funds) to conserve land to protect lake watersheds.	Selectmen	On-going
	Continue to promote the use of Best Management Practices for Stormwater Management and for Erosion and Sedimentation Control through education of the Planning Board and Code Enforcement Officer.	Planning Board; Selectmen; Road Commissioner	On-going
	Develop Subdivision regulations that incorporate use of Best Management Practices for Stormwater Management and for Erosion and Sedimentation Control.	Planning Board; Selectmen	2010
Explore and refine boat regulations to address speed, nuisance and safety.	Develop regulations that reduce impacts of motorized water craft: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore limiting the size/#/horsepower of boats</li> <li>• Explore limitations on use of jet skis on the lakes</li> <li>• Develop regulations that are not too burdensome</li> <li>• Make regulations problem specific and lake specific</li> <li>• Call on the state to enforce their own rules</li> </ul>	Selectmen	2009-2010
Ensure that water quality is sufficient to provide for the protection and propagation of fish, and wildlife and provide for recreation in and on the water.	Expand water quality-testing programs for the town's lakes, rivers and streams. Give the highest priority to those water bodies most important for recreation and for fisheries and wildlife.	DEP Volunteer Program; Dennys and East Machias Watershed Council; Cathance	On-going

<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will protect and preserve the natural resources on which its economy and quality of life depend.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
		Watershed Association	
	Include the DEP evaluation method (technical guide referenced in footnote 3) for phosphorous allocation in the town's lakes in new Subdivision Regulations (to be developed).	Planning Board/ Selectmen	On-going
	Encourage the stewardship opportunities furthered by Cathance Lake Association	Selectmen	On-going
	Encourage replacement of malfunctioning septic systems. Establish a recommended replacement and pumping schedule. Educate the public about the importance of maintaining and replacing on-site systems.	Code Enforcement Officer/DEP	On-going
	Examine the technical and management needs, and costs associated with clustered septic treatment alternatives to retrofit existing problem areas.	Selectmen	Long Term
	Continue dialogue and exchange of information on watershed planning issues with neighboring communities.	Planning Board/ WCCOG/Dennys and East Machias River Watershed Councils	On-going
Protect drinking water supplies.	Make application, where eligible, to the Small Community Grant Program to upgrade any failing septic systems.	Planning Board/ Selectmen	On-going
<b>Land Suitability</b>			
Ensure that development is located on land that is capable of supporting on-site water and septic systems.	Require a soil evaluation test prior to the issuance of a building permit in accordance with state regulations to require that developers demonstrate that soils are adequate for the intended purpose, that their projects will not be located on wetlands, on slopes of 20 percent or greater, or on floodplains.	Planning Board/ Selectmen	On-going
	Direct development to areas with appropriate soils, slopes, and drainage conditions.	Planning Board	On-going
	Prevent/discourage development on steep slopes.	Planning Board	On-going
Ensure that new development preserves, to the greatest extent possible, the natural and cover and vegetation.	Require in the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances that developers demonstrate that their projects will be compatible with the existing topography, and will preserve land cover and natural vegetation, to the greatest extent practical.	Planning Board/ Selectmen	Short term
<b>Floodplains</b>			
Avoid problems associated with floodplain development and use along the town's Shorelands.	Seek support to have floodplains mapped and to participate in the Federal Flood Insurance Program	Planning Board/ Selectmen	

<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will protect and preserve the natural resources on which its economy and quality of life depend.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
	Develop a Floodplain Management Ordinance to discourage new residential, industrial, commercial and other significant development within 100 year floodplains.	Planning Board/ Selectmen	On-going
<b>Fish and Wildlife Habitat</b>			
Protect existing fish and waterfowl/wading bird habitats within the town mapped as Essential Habitat or Significant Habitat.	Establish protection provisions in the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and in standards for construction and maintenance of local roads to ensure early consultation with a Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Biologist when development is proposed in or near the site of Essential or Significant Habitats.	Planning Board; Road Commissioner	Short-term (within 2 years)
	Make use of the most recent data on rare plants, animals, and natural communities and important wildlife habitats provided by the Beginning with Habitat program of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, included on maps in this document.	Planning Board	On-going
	Protect the high and moderate fisheries habitats in accordance with Shoreland Zoning regulations around these habitats. Consider increasing setback distances for large (>10 lots) new development proposals.	Planning Board	Short-term (within 2 years)
	Encourage landowners to protect and preserve wildlife habitat, and utilize conservation programs to preserve undeveloped land.	Selectmen/ Planning Board	On-going
<b>Forest and Farmland Resources</b>			
Support long term sustainable forest management within Cooper.	Consider tax incentives or other regulatory preferences to support value-added forest-product manufacturing and agricultural processing.	Selectmen	On-going
	Monitor transfers of large land ownerships and get a seat at the table in conservation transactions where possible to ensure traditional accesses and uses are retained.	Selectmen/ Planning Board/ Assessors	On-going
	Refer landowners to MFS district foresters and provide information about Tree Growth programs (lobby legislators to fully fund the program).	Town Clerk/ Selectmen/ Assessors	On-going
	Support timber management and agricultural activities on prime farmland and in rural areas of Cooper.	Selectmen/ Planning Board	On-going
	Promote use of best management practices for timber harvesting and agricultural production.	Planning Board	On-going
	Include in any future land use ordinance that commercial or subdivision developments maintain areas with prime agricultural soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.	Planning Board	As needed
	Limit residential growth in areas of high timber value through subdivision regulations that	Selectmen/ Planning Board	Short-term (within 2

<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will protect and preserve the natural resources on which its economy and quality of life depend.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
	encourage cluster designs, minimize forest fragmentation and limit road extensions for residential use.	Maine Forest Service	years)
<b>Scenic Resources</b>			
Preserve important scenic resources.	Adopt zoning provisions that discourage development on identified ridgetops, mountains and islands.	Planning Board	Short Term
<b>Education and Traditional Use</b>			
Ensure that traditional use of lands and access to water are protected as development pressures increase.	Identify areas in need of additional access.	Selectmen	Immediate (within two years)
	Respect private property rights but seek to maintain traditional uses of any private roads or rights of way to the water. Negotiations with private land owners to secure these accesses will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledgement/celebration of landowners who continue the centuries old practice of allowing public use of their lands;</li> <li>• Informal agreements allowing public use of lands;</li> <li>• More formal agreements allowing public use of lands until and unless problems arise from disrespectful use of private land (eg. Leaving gates open, littering, vandalism);</li> <li>• Providing property tax incentives to property owners who grant written, revocable rights of access across their property;</li> <li>• Obtaining rights of first refusal for access points or property of critical importance to the public;</li> <li>• Purchasing permanent easements or fee title to access points or property of critical importance to the public.</li> </ul>	Selectmen; Planning Board	Immediate (within 2 years)
Educate residents and visitors about important habitat and water quality values.	Develop informational signs and brochures (maps) in critical habitat and public accesses, eg. Cathance Lake public access.	Selectmen/ Watershed and Lake Associations	On-going
Utilize financial incentive programs	Encourage landowners to participate in farm, open space and tree growth programs.	Selectmen/ CEO Planning Board/ Assessors	On-going

<b>ECONOMICS AND EMPLOYMENT</b>			
Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.</li> <li>▪ The town will have an educated population ready to enter the work force.</li> <li>▪ Enhance and support existing businesses in Cooper and promote new business that is compatible with existing rural community values and patterns of development<sup>1</sup>.</li> </ul>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsible Part(ies)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Promotion of Economic Activity</b>			
Promote expansion and diversification of the economic base of the community.	Provide information on sources of business assistance at the Town Office, to include materials available through the Department of Tourism, Community and Economic Development, the Eastern Maine Development Corporation, the Sunrise County Economic Council and others.	Town Clerk; WCCOG; SCEC; EMDC	On-going
Support nature based tourism as an economic development strategy for Cooper.	Participate in regional economic development efforts that promote the natural assets in Cooper.	Selectmen directly, or through designee	On-going
	Support business endeavors in nature-based tourism	Selectmen directly, or through designee	On-going
<b>Program Awareness</b>			
The town will obtain information on programs that provide support for roads, parks, public transportation or other infrastructure and activities that materially aid the town’s economy.	As needed the town will obtain aid from higher levels of government, County, State and Federal, including such things as Community Development Block Grants, USDA Rural Development and others identified in the Capital Improvement Plan.	Selectmen	Immediate and on-going
	Work with Economic Development groups to expand high speed internet access within Cooper.	Selectmen	Immediate and on-going
The town will assist those who are eligible for assistance and help them to receive it.	Town offices will provide current information about sources of public assistance, unemployment assistance, job training, and aid to the elderly and/or handicapped.	Town Clerk	On-going
<b>Educated Workforce</b>			
Ensure that the educational opportunities, both academic and vocational, address the needs of Cooper residents.	Attend meetings with School Board and local/regional businesses to identify work force needs and educational foundation to support them.	Selectmen; Union 106 Directors	Long-term

<sup>1</sup> This goal and the implementation measures that follow from it under the heading of sustainable development recognize the multiple business interests that sustain rural families over the course of a year – from their homes, and from other locations. This recognition assumes that there is and will be a mixture of uses in all districts of our community; an independent spirit among local residents and entrepreneurs; and a general resistance to excessive regulation. It also recognizes that there are some basic “good neighbor” standards that can be developed to address the desired mixture of uses.

<b>ECONOMICS AND EMPLOYMENT</b>			
Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.</li> <li>▪ The town will have an educated population ready to enter the work force.</li> <li>▪ Enhance and support existing businesses in Cooper and promote new business that is compatible with existing rural community values and patterns of development<sup>1</sup>.</li> </ul>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsible Part(ies)</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
	Encourage and support efforts to provide job training and continuing education.	Selectmen	Ongoing
<b>Sustainable Development</b>			
The town will develop a land use ordinance to attract, enhance and support existing and future development, while minimizing negative impacts of non-compatible uses.	A future land use ordinance will identify appropriate areas for commercial and industrial development.	Planning Board; Selectmen	Immediate
	“Good neighbor” standards will be developed for home based businesses to ensure compatibility with residential neighborhoods and adjacent properties.	Planning Board	Short-term (within 2 years)
Allow and encourage existing land resource based industries to thrive in their current locations.	Provide large rural areas for agricultural and forestry uses.	Planning Board	Short-term (within 2 years)

<b>HOUSING</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for Cooper residents.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Programs and Grants</b>			
Pursue programs and grants that can assist in ensuring that at least 10% of new residential development meet the definition of affordable housing.	The town will work with regional agencies to be able to make referrals on programs and grants (CDBG housing assistance and rehabilitation programs) for the use of residents.	Town Clerk; WCCOG; WHCA	Immediate
	The town will welcome and encourage participation in programs, grants and projects for the construction of subsidized housing whether within the town or the region including grants to homeowners for improvements to energy efficiency, habitability, etc	Selectmen	Immediate
	The town will welcome and encourage participation in programs, grants and projects, within the town or the region to insure sufficient, affordable housing options for its elderly citizens	Selectmen	Immediate

<b>HOUSING</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for Cooper residents.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
	The town will seek the assistance of regional and state agencies in the opportunities, technologies and permitting requirements for sewage treatment systems to address waste disposal needs within already developed areas.	Selectmen	Immediate
<b>Codes and Regulation</b>			
Ensure that local codes and ordinances are enforced for the public health, safety and welfare.	Work to correct all known failed or inadequate subsurface sewage disposal systems.	CEO; Planning Board	On-going
	Work with the planning board to address any need for modification to the existing land use regulations that may be appropriate.	CEO; Planning Board; Selectmen	On-going
	Ensure that the code enforcement officer (CEO) works to address reported violations of local ordinances and State laws and regulations that affect health, safety or community conditions such as the automobile graveyard provisions, removal of unsafe or deteriorated buildings, replacement of driveway culverts, etc.	Selectmen; Code Enforcement Officer	On-going
The future land use ordinance will not preclude the development of affordable housing	The town will continue to encourage affordable housing opportunities by allowing a mixture of housing types, including accessory apartments.	Selectmen; Planning Board	Short-term (within 2 years)
	Continue to allow mixed uses and mixed income housing within the residential areas of the town.	Planning Board	On-going
	Encourage senior citizen housing opportunities and provide residential areas that allow single and multi-family dwellings, as well as manufactured housing.	Planning Board	On-going

<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will encourage, promote and develop efficient and safe transportation facilities that will accommodate the anticipated growth and economic development of the town and the region.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
The town will plan for optimum use, construction, maintenance and repair of town roads.	The town has developed and will maintain a system to prioritize maintenance of town roadways.	Selectmen/Road Commissioner	On-going
	The town will pursue training from the MDOT Local Roads Center and adoption of the Road Surface Management System software to prioritize maintenance and construction of town roadways.	Selectmen/Road Commissioner	Immediate

<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will encourage, promote and develop efficient and safe transportation facilities that will accommodate the anticipated growth and economic development of the town and the region.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
	Route 191 requires reconstruction and repair; the town will request that shoulders be added to improve public safety.	Selectmen/Road Commissioner	Long Term
	The town will explore a system to phase out winter maintenance (plowing/sanding) on unpaved town roads.	Selectmen/Road Commissioner	Long Term
The town will investigate town roads that are a large expense for very few residents.	Research the cost/benefit impact of retiring town roads that serve less than five residences	Selectmen/Road Commissioner	Long Term
The town will ensure that new development does not negatively impact the capacity or safety of existing roadways.	The town will consider a local roads ordinance that harmonizes the access of driveways and entrances with the state access management regulations and make the new state regulations available at the town office for property owners.	Selectmen	Short Term
	Local access management standards will include such design requirements as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limiting total number of access points</li> <li>• Directing access to side and service roads</li> <li>• Coordinating access among adjoining properties</li> <li>• Combining subdivision lots onto one access road vs. multiple driveways</li> <li>• Funneling of traffic through one access drive</li> </ul>	Selectmen	Short Term
	The town will consider increasing center line setbacks on collector roads from 35 feet to 50 feet to accommodate future drainage, utility and safety concerns.	Selectmen/ Planning Board	Short Term

<b>PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate current and anticipated growth and economic development.</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will maintain and improve access to recreational opportunities.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Local Services</b>			
Local services will be maintained and address community needs.	The town will address future funding needs for new and replacement items through the Capital Improvement Plan, to be reviewed/updated biennially	Selectmen	On-going
	Continue to explore best alternatives for solid waste disposal	Selectmen	On-going
Promote and develop social, cultural and recreational activities in Cooper.	Create a Civic Improvement Committee to identify projects, assist with fundraising (including donations and grants) and events.	Selectmen	Short term 2-3 years
<b>Public Access</b>			

<b>PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate current and anticipated growth and economic development.</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will maintain and improve access to recreational opportunities.</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Encourage recreational opportunities and increase public access to surface water.	Fund improvements on town owned land, including landing facilities, as described in the Capital Improvement Plan.	Selectmen	Immediate
	Provide facilities on lakes within Cooper that do not duplicate facilities serving the same lakes in neighboring towns or unorganized territories.	Selectmen	On-going
Secure public access to the water.	Pursue the wide variety of available measures to secure such accesses. These could include: Landowner negotiations, Cooperation with local land trusts, Accepting donations of land or easements, Purchase of easements or land, Use of Land for Maine's Future funds	Selectmen; Planning Board	On-going and as funding allows
	The town will educate itself on the legalities of public access to the shore and stay up to date on changes in case law that could affect it over time.	Selectmen; Planning Board	On-going
<b>Education about Services</b>			
Local services will be visible and understood by Cooper Citizens.	The town will continue to educate its citizens on the importance of recycling through the use of fliers, informational meetings and school programs.	Town Clerk; WCCOG	On-going
	Literature on the local recycling program will be made readily available to residents at the town office.	Town Clerk	On-going
<b>Open Space</b>			
Encourage the preservation of open space.	Land use ordinance will include provisions that will require major new residential developments reviewed by the planning board to present recreational and open space areas in their plans	Selectmen and Planning Board	Short-term (within 2 years)

<b>LAND USE</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will preserve and protect the character of the town that is vital to the continued stability of the local economy; Cooper will continue to be a great place to live, work and vacation</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b>Ordinances and Regulation</b>			
Review and revise existing use regulations, consistent with the goals and guidelines of this Comprehensive Plan.	Prepare a land use ordinance consistent with the future land use designations in the Comprehensive Plan.	Planning Board	Short term (within 2 years)
	Update the existing ordinances to ensure their consistency with state and federal laws and the local needs.	Planning Board; CEO	On-going
<b>Enforcement</b>			
Enforce ordinances fully and fairly.	Ensure ordinances contain proper legal language and definitions.	Planning Board; Selectmen	On-going

<b>LAND USE</b>			
<b>Goal: Cooper will preserve and protect the character of the town that is vital to the continued stability of the local economy; Cooper will continue to be a great place to live, work and vacation</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Strategy</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
	Management and elected officials support the code enforcement department.	Planning Board; Selectmen	On-going
	Provide the code enforcement officer with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A MRSA §4451	Selectmen; CEO	On-going
	Provide adequate time for the code enforcement officer to ensure compliance.	Planning Board; Selectmen	On-going
<b>Encouraging Growth where Services Exist</b>			
Promote and support growth in the existing village areas of Cooper.	Locate/renovate any town office or a new community center within the village area.	Selectmen	Short-term (within 2 years)
	Upgrade and locate new recreational facilities within the village area.	Selectmen	Immediate
	Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas in the Future Land Use Plan	Selectmen	On-going
Support the locations, types, scales, and intensities of land uses the town desires as stated in its vision.	Track new development in the community by type and location.	Selectmen; Planning Board	On-going
	Periodically (at least every five years) evaluate implementation of the plan.	Selectmen; Planning Board	On-going
<b>Encouraging Resource Based Activities in Rural Areas</b>			
Allow and encourage existing land resource based industries to thrive in their current locations.	Provide large rural areas for agricultural and forestry uses.	Planning Board	Short-term (within 2 years)
<b>Education about Land Use</b>			
Educate residents about the requirements of local and state regulations.	Provide a list of all local ordinances at the town office.	Town Clerk	Immediate
Educate new and prospective residents about traditional land use issues in Cooper.	Develop educational materials describing traditional uses and practices including issues such as shore access, hunting, fishing, and community institutions.	Selectmen or their designee	Immediate
	Make these materials available at town offices, schools and local businesses.	Town Clerk	On-going

<b>REGIONAL COORDINATION</b>			
<b>Public Facilities and Services</b>			
The town will cooperate on the delivery of regional services and endeavor to achieve economies of scale where feasible.	Cooper will continue to cooperate with neighboring communities to seek funding for upgrading or replacing inadequate well and septic systems and reducing overboard discharge.	Selectmen	On-going

<b>REGIONAL COORDINATION</b>			
	Cooper will stay current with planning and emergency response to pandemic diseases through its regional mutual aid agreements.	Selectmen	On-going
	The town will seek out cooperative means of reducing regional administrative costs for the school district and delivery of public services.	Selectmen/School Board	On-going
<b>Regional Development</b>			
The town will participate in regional organizations that provide technical assistance and information about business support and regional economic development opportunities.	Membership in the St. Croix Economic Alliance and the Washington County Council of Governments and participation in the Sunrise County Economic Council.	Selectmen directly, or through appointment of others	Immediate
Coordinate the town's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts.	Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies	Selectmen, Planning Board	Ongoing
Advocate for infrastructure improvements to enhance the economic competitiveness of Cooper and Washington County.	Advocate for improvements to State highways, airports, seaports, rail corridors and telecommunication facilities to enhance the regional economy.	Selectmen	Ongoing
<b>Regional Transportation</b>			
Cooper will cooperate in the development of regional transportation policy.	Cooper will participate actively in regional transportation meetings and policy development	Selectmen	On-going
	The town will advocate in regional and state meetings for reconstruction of Route 191 in Cooper.	Selectmen	On-going
	The town of Cooper supports use of any portion of the Calais Branch corridor for rail service, if and when it is feasible, to relieve freight truck traffic on regional roads.	Selectmen	On-going
	The town may seek legislative action to temporarily close and/or post Route 191 to truck traffic due to unsafe conditions and/or until the road is properly constructed.	Selectmen	Immediate
	The town will continue to petition the State to reclassify Route 191 from Baring Plantation to East Machias as an arterial highway, perhaps to become Route 1A, in order to reconstruct it and maintain it in a condition that functions according to the demand placed on it by movement of freight and commuters.	Selectmen	Immediate
<b>Natural Resources</b>			
Protect shared critical habitats.	Cooperate with neighboring towns in the designation of critical resource areas where they cross municipal boundaries.	Selectmen, Planning Board	On-going

<b>REGIONAL COORDINATION</b>			
Ensure that water quality is sufficient to provide for the protection and propagation of fish, and wildlife and provide for recreation in and on the water.	Expand water quality-testing programs for the town's lakes, rivers and streams. Give the highest priority to those water bodies most important for recreation and for fisheries and wildlife.	DEP Volunteer Program; Dennys and East Machias Watershed Council; Cathance Watershed Association	On-going
	Continue dialogue and exchange of information on watershed planning issues with neighboring communities.	Planning Board/WCCOG/Dennys and East Machias River Watershed Councils	On-going

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SURVEY FOR COOPER, ME**

The town of Cooper is preparing its first Comprehensive Plan and we need your input. Two centuries have seen the town change from a predominantly forest and farming community to a rural residential community linked to nearby services centers of Calais, Baileyville and Machias. We can choose to plan our future.

What do you like about Cooper today? What is worthwhile to preserve? What should Cooper be like in 2015? 2025?

**PLEASE take a few minutes to answer the survey and RESPOND BY Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009.**

Return your survey by:

- A) Going on-line (**OUR PREFERENCE!**) to [www.wccog.net/coopersurvey](http://www.wccog.net/coopersurvey) (fill in your # for the fuel draw on-line), **OR**
- B) Folding the survey so the address printed on the back page is visible and mailing it to the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

**As an extra incentive for participation all completed surveys will be added to a drawing for \$100 of fuel oil from V. L. Tammaro. Keep the stub** on the bottom of this survey with your number. The same number is printed on the top of the survey. Please respond as a household or, if you have different opinions, copy the survey and send in both copies. LIMIT 2 surveys per household.

Each adult resident and property owner is encouraged to participate in the survey. Only completed surveys will be included in the draw to be announced at Town Meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Preliminary survey results will be available at the March 25<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting.

For this survey is to be really useful, please “speak your mind” in answering these questions. The plan is expected to be ready for submission to the State and for a public hearing before the town in about 12 months.

**A. General Demographics:**

I am:	Male <input type="radio"/>	Female <input type="radio"/>	The house where I live :	I own <input type="radio"/>	I rent <input type="radio"/>	Not applicable <input type="radio"/>			
I am:	18-19 <input type="radio"/>	20-29 <input type="radio"/>	30-39 <input type="radio"/>	40-49 <input type="radio"/>	50-59 <input type="radio"/>	60-69 <input type="radio"/>	70-79 <input type="radio"/>	80-89 <input type="radio"/>	90+ <input type="radio"/>
I live in:	Cooper Year round <input type="radio"/>	How long? Yrs.	Cooper Seasonally <input type="radio"/>	How long? Yrs.					
Source of household drinking water:	Drilled well <input type="radio"/>	Spring <input type="radio"/>	Hand dug <input type="radio"/>	Bottled water <input type="radio"/>	Lake <input type="radio"/>	Other <input type="radio"/>			
My drinking water is:	Excellent <input type="radio"/>	Good <input type="radio"/>	Fair <input type="radio"/>	Poor <input type="radio"/>					
Do you filter you drinking water?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	If yes, what do you filter for:						

**⌘ Careful – some of your answers are on the other side!**

**Town of Cooper Comprehensive Plan Survey - \$100 Fuel Draw**

**KEEP THIS STUB** until drawing date at Town Meeting on March 25th, 2009. Survey responses are anonymous so we only have a number to announce the winner. The winning number will be announced at Town Meeting. Thank you for your input!

**Your** Survey Number (**needed** to claim your \$100 fuel prize) \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Housing, Development and Preservation**

To address the Growth Management Act requirement that towns seek to create a minimum of 10% of housing stock to be “affordable” – defined as costing a household no more than 30% of adjusted gross income for rent or mortgage – please mark an “x” in the columns below as ways to Make Housing Affordable in Cooper:

	Strongly Favor	Favor	No Opinion	Disfavor	Strongly Disfavor
<b>To make housing less expensive to develop do you favor (see the following 3 questions):</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>enacting regulations to increase density, decrease lot size, setbacks and road widths:</li> </ul>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>allowing the addition of at least one accessory apartment per dwelling unit in growth areas, subject to site suitability</li> </ul>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>designating a location(s) in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed.</li> </ul>					
Create a community affordable housing committee					
Participate in a regional affordable housing coalition					

Development Do you favor or oppose development of the following in Cooper – Please mark an “x” in the column

	Strongly Favor	Favor	No Opinion	Disfavor	Strongly Disfavor
Outfitting/Guide services					
Recreational Equipment Sales and Service					
Recreational/Educational Facilities					
Arts in the Community (Creative Economy/Businesses)					
Retail store(s)					
Business/Professional Buildings/Uses					
Home-based businesses					
Nursing/Assisted living homes					
Bed and Breakfasts					
Motels					
Large Resort/Hotel					
Industrial Park					
Restaurants					
Seasonal campgrounds					
Regional airport					
Liquified natural gas pipeline					
Multi-Use Trails					
Public parking area(s)					
Outdoor commercial recreation					
Casino or gaming facility					
Gas Station/convenience store					
Golf course					
Sewage sludge spreading					
Front End Process Residue (FEPR) eg. ash disposal					
Confined Animal Feeding Operation (large #s of animals concentrated in structures)					
Small scale farming					
Tire/Junk/Salvage yards					
Adult Entertainment					
Park and Ride Facility					

Public investments: Do you favor or disfavor town INVESTMENTS in the following: Please mark with an X

	Strongly Favor (\$)	Favor (\$)	No Opinion (\$)	Disfavor (\$)	Strongly Disfavor (\$)	MARK ONLY 3!!! of your highest priorities
Scenic View Protection (eg. By purchase of conservation easement)						
Restore/renovate Cathance Grange						
Construct new Town Office/Community Building						
Recreational facilities						
Cemeteries improvement/expansion						
Hiking/walking trails						
Multi-use trails						
Road Maintenance/Improvements:						
• stormwater run-off from Town Roads into Cooper Lakes						
• Study unpaved roads for discontinuance of winter maintenance						
• Discontinue winter maintenance of all unpaved town roads (Vining, Grove Pond, Crow, Dodge, East Ridge Extension, Green Hill)						
• Add/include shoulders in future road re-paving projects						
Should Cooper expand town funded school bus service to more regional schools						
Public access on Cathance Lake in addition to Town Beach						
Develop expanded facilities at Cathance Lake including (see next questions):						
• swimming area						
• public dock						
• picnic area/garbage facilities						
• bathroom facilities						
• parking						
• boat ramp						
Purchase Public access to surface waters						

Regionalism: Please indicate your level of agreement and comments on the following regional issues/services:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Should the town:					
• explore regional governance structures to reduce costs of civic administration					
• maintain school choice for tuition paid students					
• cooperate with neighboring towns on public works expenditures					
• re-consider de-organization of Town Government					
• consider annexation of land from unorganized territory in the future?					
• continue to support regional ambulance services					
• coordinate with Route 191 towns to petition Maine DOT to:					
o update traffic count data					
o reconstruct Route 191 (widen and add shoulders)					
• participate in a regional airport authority					
• petition Maine DOT to reclassify Route 191 as an arterial highway					

Preservation, Planning and Land Use. Should the town...? Please mark your opinion with an X.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Develop a town wide zoning ordinance for Cooper.					
Include the following specific strategies in a Zoning ordinance (see next 4 questions):					
• disallow development in areas identified as having particular scenic value to the town.					
• attract business to Cooper					
• add lighting controls to shield off property glare					
• require residential development be in concentrated areas					
• require commercial development be in concentrated areas					
Provide curb side pick up of trash					
Adopt a noise control ordinance					
Petition Maine Department of Environmental Protection to designate Vining Lake as a non-motorized lake					
Create a fund for purchase of additional lands for public access.					
Offer tax and other incentives to (see next 4 questions):					
• discourage development in areas identified as having particular scenic value to the town.					
• to attract business to Cooper					
• to encourage residential development in concentrated areas					
• to encourage commercial development in concentrated areas					

**C. Facilities and Services.** Please indicate your level of satisfaction by marking an X in the column:

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	No Opinion	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Town Services:					
• Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services					
• Town office hours					
• Public Works					
• Recreational facilities					
Community and Regional Services and Facilities					
• Health Services					
• Law Enforcement Services					
• Ambulance Services					
• Adult education					
• Broadband (high-speed) internet access					
• Community-wide Events and Celebrations					
Recycling center/landfill/transfer station					
Summer road conditions					
Winter road conditions					
Cemetery condition					
Property tax level					

**D. Opinion Poll** (attach separate sheet if you wish to extend your comments)

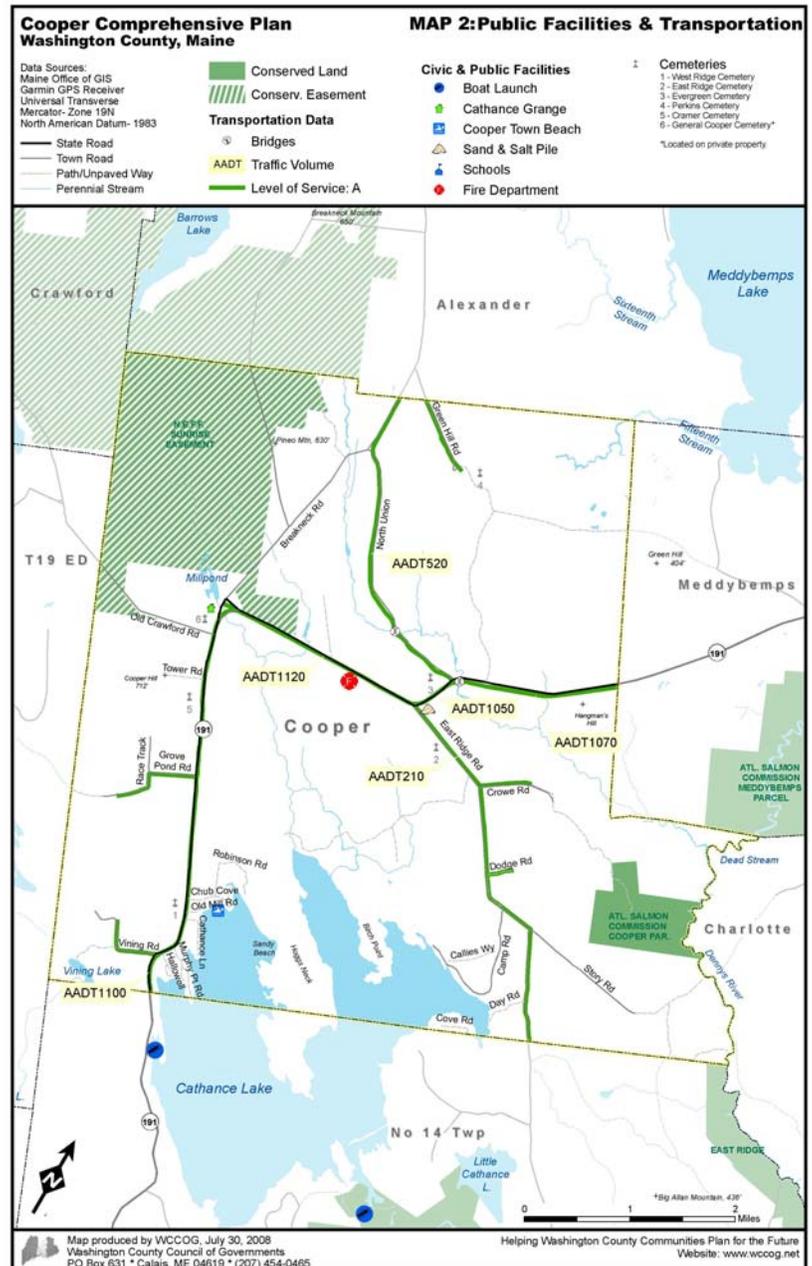
1. What are the things about the town of Cooper that you like and would preserve?

2. What are the things about the town of Cooper that you would like to see changed?

3. Describe how you see the town of Cooper of the future.

4. The Growth Management Act requires that local Comprehensive Plans include a future land use map that designates areas of the town for growth and for rural development (there can be more than one of each in the town). In your vision of the town's future, where should they be located? A map from the Comprehensive Plan is included here if you would like to draw these locations on the map. This map will be printed on 11 by 17 inch paper in the Comprehensive Plan.

By Feb 23rd, 2009 please enter your responses at [www.wccog.net/coopersurvey](http://www.wccog.net/coopersurvey) or return the completed survey questionnaire by folding it and mailing it to the Comprehensive Planning Committee using the address on the opposite side of this page. Thank you!



**Written Comments on Surveys**

**General Demographics:**

Do you filter your drinking water? If yes, what do you filter for:

- Duck and geese shit
- Sand
- Anything
- Sand
- Soil particles
- Iron
- regular filter
- sediment
- particle
- I distill my drinking water
- clean of bacteria

**Housing, Development and Preservation**

Housing is presently affordable and mobile homes are allowed. I feel there is no change necessary to ordinances.

**Development:**

	Comments written in by respondents:
Outfitting/Guide services	
Recreational Equipment Sales and Service	
Recreational/Educational Facilities	
Arts in the Community (Creative Economy/Businesses)	
Retail store(s)	
Business/Professional Buildings/Uses	
Home-based businesses	
Nursing/Assisted living homes	
Bed and Breakfasts	
Motels	
Large Resort/Hotel	
Industrial Park	▪ Any demand?
Restaurants	
Seasonal campgrounds	
Regional airport	▪ Machias?
Liquified natural gas pipeline	
Multi-Use Trails	
Public parking area(s)	
Outdoor commercial recreation	
Casino or gaming facility	
Gas Station/convenience store	
Golf course	
Sewage sludge spreading	▪ Site appropriate - OK
Front End Process Residue (FEPR) eg. ash disposal	
Confined Animal Feeding Operation (large #s of animals concentrated in structures)	
Small scale farming	
Tire/Junk/Salvage yards	
Adult Entertainment	
Park and Ride Facility	
Other	Many of these choices make no sense for Cooper
	Tower Site Development
	town office, gift shop
The motels and large resort hotel situation is tricky. I just can't see how they could be developed without a negative impact on the ecology of the Lake. If it could then I would be in favor to bring jobs and tourist attention to area.	

**Public investments:**

	<b>Comments written in by respondents:</b>
Scenic View Protection (eg. By purchase of conservation easement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provided seller is willing.</li> </ul>
Restore/renovate Cathance Grange	
Construct new Town Office/Community Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Or convert grange.</li> </ul>
Recreational facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minimal.</li> </ul>
Cemeteries improvement/expansion	
Hiking/walking trails	
Multi-use trails	
Road Maintenance/Improvements:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stormwater run-off from Town Roads into Cooper Lakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Correcting the runoff, yes.</li> <li>▪ Where there really is a problem.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study unpaved roads for discontinuance of winter maintenance</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discontinue winter maintenance of all unpaved town roads (Vining, Grove Pond, Crow, Dodge, East Ridge Extension, Green Hill)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add/include shoulders in future road re-paving projects</li> </ul>	
Should Cooper expand town funded school bus service to more regional schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Non-applicable due to state re-grouping as mandated.</li> </ul>
Public access on Cathance Lake in addition to Town Beach	
Develop expanded facilities at Cathance Lake including (see next questions):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ These all exist now if not on Cooper on the lake just the same.</li> <li>▪ Too many non-residents already use the town beach as is.</li> <li>▪ Or expand facilities at T-14 boat launch.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• swimming area</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public dock</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• picnic area/garbage facilities</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bathroom facilities</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parking</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• boat ramp</li> </ul>	
Purchase Public access to surface waters	

**Preservation, Planning and Land Use.**

	<b>Comments written in by respondents:</b>
Develop a town wide zoning ordinance for Cooper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not enough development pressure.</li> </ul>
Include the following specific strategies in a Zoning ordinance (see next 4 questions):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disallow development in areas identified as having particular scenic value to the town.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attract business to Cooper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited – as only convenience store</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• add lighting controls to shield off property glare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not sure what this means.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• require residential development be in concentrated areas</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• require commercial development be in concentrated areas</li> </ul>	
Provide curb side pick up of trash	
Adopt a noise control ordinance	
Petition Maine Department of Environmental Protection to designate Vining Lake as a non-motorized lake	
Create a fund for purchase of additional lands for public access.	
Offer tax and other incentives to (see next 4 questions):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discourage development in areas identified as having particular scenic value to the town.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to attract business to Cooper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Convenience store</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to encourage residential development in concentrated areas</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to encourage commercial development in concentrated areas</li> </ul>	

**Facilities and Services**

	Comments written in by respondents:
Town Services:	
• Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services	
• Town office hours	o Elected officials have no time-off, they need free time.
• Public Works	
• Recreational facilities	
Community and Regional Services and Facilities	o For all of Washington County
• Health Services	
• Law Enforcement Services	
• Ambulance Services	
• Adult education	
• Broadband (high-speed) internet access	▪ Do we have this?
• Community-wide Events and Celebrations	▪ Great idea, I'll volunteer.
Recycling center/landfill/transfer station	▪ Fine in Marion only.
Summer road conditions	
Winter road conditions	▪ Better than in either town on either side of us.
Cemetery condition	
Property tax level	

**Question 1: What are the things about the town of Cooper that you like and would preserve?**

- Less people and less houses than other towns.
- Keep it small.
- Almost everything: Its unique wilderness/rural scapes; its many treasures: waterways, flora and fauna, as yet undiscovered/unexplored mysteries; its historical graveyards and old houses (what's left) including foundations for archaeological research; its quiet lazy atmosphere; we are almost invisible, anonymous: few people know we're here; drivers on Rte 191 aren't aware when they've entered Cooper and when they've exited, they just pass a few widespread houses; most residents are kind and helpful, quick to come to the aid of someone in need of help w/o expecting recompense.
- Quiet rural atmosphere.
- Neighborly people helping each other.
- The beauty of the lake.
- Friendly and giving neighbors.
- Salmon fishing.
- The reason for "no opinion" comments – we don't know too much about the subjects and the costs in taxes.
- I like the space and central location in relation to neighboring communities.
- The lake is especially nice and should be preserved.
- The rural environment/aspect.
- Seeing a variety of wildlife and plants.
- Scenic beauty.
- Interesting people who are community oriented.
- Having access to pristine lake for swimming, fishing, etc.
- Allowing people to do what they need to do as long as it hurts nothing and no one – "independent spirit".
- All of it – just the way it is now.

- Cathance Lake – We don't need 50/100 more boats on the lake at this time 2009, 10 or 11.
- Viewscapes
- Public access to private lands
- Grange
- Loons
- The residents' friendliness
- Diversity of class levels
- Scenic beauty of the lake
- Cooper is our vacation place in the summer. We go to enjoy nature, quiet peace, the lake and rest. It is important to me that Cooper stay removed from the hustle of bigger towns and cities, that the pristine scenery and conditions of nature not be compromised by over development and noise.
- Lake and views.
- Scenic views, the pristine health of Cathance Lake and low population on the lake.
- The lakes and the woods.
- We chose to retire from Orono to Cathance Lake. It is now our permanent legal address. We like being part of Cooper. We like the peaceful quietness of the lake that currently exists. We welcome new people as friends. We want to preserve the wildlife habitats that currently exist around the lake. The Cathance Lake Association is committed to keeping the lake as one of the top five in the state. It is easier to do that with the current level of activity that exists around the lake.
- I would encourage development not preservation. I don't feel development is out of control in Cooper.
- The "pitch in" attitude of residents.
- Virginity of Cathance Lake – to extent possible.
- The folks who do this are highly commended and thanked by this resident.
- All we need to do is educate our children and provide winter maintenance of roads. Everything else is a luxury/bonus. We need to keep the costs down for our large senior population.
- Cathance Grange Hall
- Town Beach
- The town of Cooper stays a town and does not give up its right of self determination.
- I like the peace and quite of Cooper, I would like to see the Natural Beauty of the town remain.
- I would like to see the Grange as our community building and the town hall combined. keep history, very important.
- The beauty of the place and the biodiversity  
The freedom to roam and to do things you wish to do
- Town Beach
- scenic beauty
- CLEAN woods and waters
- I go to Cooper camp to enjoy the beauty of the lake. I dislike hearing loud and noisy motor boats or noisy people who intrude on my space
- It's rural setting.
- Having local people be able to keep their properties without having to sell to out of staters because they can not afford the taxes.
- Personal freedom
- calm, peaceful environment
- The Lakes

- rural atmosphere
- Cooper and Cathance Lake is a very serene place. The relative peace and quiet is unlike any other place we know of. That is what makes Cooper a special place, and we feel that should be preserved as much as possible.
- The lake, the vistas, the quality of life, the quiet and peacefulness, and the slowness of change.
- clean water, lakes, streams and marshes, the town beach, local agriculture, local government, nice people, bird and animal habitat areas, various scenic views, woodlands and fields, continued plowing of roads currently plowed by town.
- Beauty and nature.
- the small quiet town and friendly people. love the lake and enjoy peace and quiet.
- The lake, the natural beauty, the agriculture, the grange, more help for the fire department.

**Question 2: What are the things about the town of Cooper that you would like to see changed?**

- Forget building big houses on the lake.
- No building codes.
- We badly need a community center. Cooper has no place where people can socialize. There is no cohesion of residents, just a bunch of people living in the same area.
- Higher standards for professional timber cutters on tracts of land, they leave devastation behind them, their giant machines knock down trees they don't harvest, gouge out the earth.
- Town office with regular hours of operation (i.e. at location of fire department, not at a private residence).
- State funding for fire department.
- Better road maintenance including all of Cooper's roads with winter maintenance.
- Condition of East Ridge Road.
- We could have a larger population and more transportation arteries.
- Would like to see more businesses in Cooper. We need a convenience/gas station.
- More educational programs – history, archaeology, a library, etc
- We need a town office/community building! We need to take better care of old historical cemeteries (East Ridge Road one has major damage – very sad).
- More clean up after logging operation done – why leave woods a shambles?
- We need a gas station /store.
- I like the town as it stands now.
- The ideological schism that seems to have developed.
- The lack of convenience store.
- Need town office
- Convenience store in area with fuel
- A library with computer access for all – could be a great gathering site.
- My taxes to go down.
- More preservation around the lake and stream. The more we protect them, the more people will be drawn to the natural, unspoiled areas in Cooper.
- We would like to see some type of convenience store gas station, souvenir shop with local fresh produce. Some type of bed and breakfast would be beneficial for the area. Perhaps also if small farming happens – a farm stand/flower stand. Home businesses- such as day care or hairdressers or ??? shops, etc.

- Very nice the way it is, just need to rebuild population.
- Bring the lake store back! With whatever incentives it takes. A much missed gathering spot for residents/vacationers to exchange pleasantries and good information.
- Ensure that lakeside trailer parks/areas are discouraged for non-residents.
- It would be nice to have a county store again.
- Better road conditions – shoulders, etc.
- Expectations of people who move here from away – and then try to change Cooper into what they moved away from.
- Cultural activities.
- Convenience store.
- Improve Route 191 (Cooper Hwy)
- More people to have better fire department.
- Additional residents. Additional commercial development. Less effort by some to discourage growth either on Lake or commercially.
- Maybe our town could join forces with (example Alexander) another town to do things like secretarial chores (example tax collection, etc).
- I would like to see building lots at two acres or more.
- We need town offices and meeting places. We need community facilities like a library.
- Improved road conditions on Rte 191  
Less aerial spraying for blueberry crops, less pollution of aquifer, closer monitoring of cutting, especially on watersheds
- better roads and more business
- maybe the store opened up again?
- It would be nice to have a larger tax base to spare the homeowners and camp-owners. Not sure how to do that.
- It's tax structure. Lake front homes are over tax for the services they use
- Recreational vehicles allowed on own property without having the set back rule since they are all self contained. And the number allowed per lot.
- Encroaching green nanny state
- road safety
- The taxes lowered.
- Excessive property taxes.  
Lake Assoc. pests at boat ramp.
- Our property currently is inaccessible in the winter time due to no winter maintenance, even though the map shows it being a passable road. In previous years, the condition of the road in the summer time was impassible as well. The current tax rate makes that rather difficult to accept, when there is no level of service and a tax rate that equals others whom have year round access.
- The conditions on Rt.191 are terrible during the winter. I have had to stay in Machias three nights so far this winter because the roads were impassable.
- The inclination towards higher taxes, and the student busing program.
- I would like to see 191 repaired and widened, plowed by the state in winter, a town office, more supervision of cutting operations, no arial spraying for blueberries, and a start up of a local grocery/restaurant.
- More farming and business. But business that complements the rural nature and scenic beauty.

- the grange hall improved and use for town office and grange use and town events. need water and sewage. add a room or addition for town offices.
- More chance for jobs created in co-ordination with ecological preservation and nature preservation.

**Question 3: Describe how you see the town of Cooper of the future.**

- More houses and higher taxes.
- Small town, no expansion.
- More community spirit, more social events going on: clubs i.e. reading, arts/crafts. Physically- the same as it as now, unchanged.
- Warm and friendly and to all a good night.
- Being central to Washington County, it could be a hub. The “Love Lake” road could be developed as a backdoor to Bangor. The Native American meaning for Cathance is “crossroads or fingers”. I think this applies.
- Hopefully as it is, with addition of above mentioned convenience store.
- Very rural but has practical things a community needs.
- Growth but not too much as schools, services for more people will drive up taxes and not ruin an affordable community.
- More recreational, community-oriented activities. Proud of being a Cooper resident.
- Hopefully as quiet and friendly atmosphere as now.
- Greater population number, town office and library, and industrial park, and the same great people.
- Equal taxes for full and part-time residents (tax payers) to purchase resident fishing licenses.
- I would like to see Cooper as it is and has been. I am not in support of the developments that seem to be coming around the Cathance Lake shore, which may not all be in Cooper. I don’t want to see the huge “cottages” monopolize our quiet retreat.
- It should join with Twp No 14 to preserve the beauty of Cathance Lake and push the unspoiled natural land and water concepts.
- Convenience store/gas station.
- We took this survey from our personal views. We are retired and love Cooper the way it is as such – But we are realists. Cooper has more than retirees. It has families that need jobs and children etc., and we are adaptable to change – We look forward to your proposal.
- A residential community and vacation destination, with various small business providing services to the local communities.
- Hopefully – a progressive thinking town with a keen focus on maintaining a small town feel without major development for peace/tranquility of residents. A tall order but well worth the effort for generations behind us.
- Slow planned growth.
- Residential bedroom community with people who all work in surrounding communities.
- Interlocal agreement to share government services.
- A small rural town with more development around Cathance Lake area.
- Hopefully we can attract the youth to want to come and stay in Cooper and not end up being a town full of seniors only.
- I would like to see it remain as a small town.
- More people involved with a more noticeable town infrastructure and buildings.
- Better roads,  
community center/town office

continued use of lake, but better methods to reduce pollution, Organic Blueberry Processing Plant and Freezer to support and stimulate organic blueberry growers i.e. create a value added process not impacted by pricing of the general market and useful in long term impact for clean water, another valuable asset

- Hope Cooper grows into more of a community with more options for jobs.
- Quiet and peaceful as it has been in the past
- I have been at the lake all my life and have had a recreational vehicle on the lot most of my life and now they are forcing us out and raising our taxes. I have never seen such restrictions that change from year to year. I see the town run by all "Out of Staters" because the locals cannot afford to keep their property.
- Not a sustainable bedroom community if energy is expensive or rationed to "fight" global warming.
- pretty much the same as it has been for the past 20+ years
- Lower tax burden on existing business by making it worth while to do business in Cooper
- Small recreational/rural area with residential development zoned for 2 acre min. and min. 200 ft frontage on lakes and roads.
- Pretty much how it is now, but with a store again (perhaps a little gas station) and maybe the a little more winter maintenance of some of the unpaved roads.
- I would like to see it as it is now, with little change.
- Even when population of the area grows and Cooper's central location to most all local cities becomes more important, with careful planning, Cooper can retain it's rural character, clean water, and quality of life for the residents.
- Would like to see a small amount of growth particularly focused on outdoor recreation and farming.
- trying to keep it as a small community with charm and tranquility.
- Appropriate development with emphasis on above. Always preservation of the Lake. Town Hall for community center.

**Question 4: The Growth Management Act requires that local Comprehensive Plans include a future land use map that designates areas of the town for growth and for rural development (there can be more than one of each in the town). In your vision of the town's future, where should they be located? A map from the Comprehensive Plan is included here if you would like to draw these locations on the map. This map will be printed on 11 by 17 inch paper in the Comprehensive Plan.**

- In the center of Cooper: Growth (commercial) centered around the Grange Hill or the firehouse, zoned for it. Keep them all together, like in a mall with parking.
- No growth impinging on any scenic view or water.
- Let intensive housing be built in unused fields, not by clearing forestland.
- I think the town is large enough to grow for a while. Regulations now are premature.
- For growth – around Rte 191 ; Rural development – side roads. I am not as knowledgeable about this aspect. Hopefully long-time residents are better judges.
- I'll leave this up to those who have lived here all their lives – they know the area and terrain better than I do.
- I believe the center of town Fire Dept., P.O., Town Office etc should all be located nearby each – providing the town and allowing the space for rural homes to survive.
- Any stores along Rte 191.
- Develop along lakefront, public roadways, and allow for development of hunting camps or residential on private roads and driveways.
- We need to allow for growth in as many areas as possible.

- Along 191 perhaps where the store is now.
- A nice map, we liked it
- Any development should preserve the quality of the lake experience. While new homes/cottages would add to the tax base, we must be sure that the development does not adversely affect the quality of the lake experience.
- Along rt 191 by Cathance Lake.
- If zoned as above, no need to limit residential growth to certain areas; commercial growth should be kept away from Cathance Lake.
- As far from the lake as possible.
- growth area: subdivision on the lake already at early stages, application will be submitted soon; state restricts growth on wetlands, habitats and it also would be good to restrict growth on agricultural lands
- no map was sent as we never received information from the town clerk. i do not know.
- I don't know exactly. But all growth and development must not negatively impact the lake or the agriculture. All suburb and commercial development should be strictly controlled regards to environmental impact with an emphasis on also maintaining scenic beauty- the two go hand in hand.

**COOPER COMMUNITY MEETING**

**Cathance Grange Hall - September 10, 2009**

**What are your connections to Cooper?**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Board Member (5)</li> <li>• Fire Department (4)</li> <li>• Selectman</li> <li>• Assessor (2)</li> <li>• Former Town officials (6)</li> <li>• Grange members (5)</li> <li>• Board of Local Food Bank</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road Commissioner</li> <li>• Constable</li> <li>• E911 Addressing officer</li> <li>• Marion Transfer Station representative</li> <li>• Cathance Lake Association (16)</li> <li>• Cooper Free Public Library (3)</li> </ul>
--	---

**How long have you lived in/come to Cooper?**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1-5 years – 1 person</li> <li>▪ 6-10 years – 2 people</li> <li>▪ 11 to 20 years – 6 people</li> <li>▪ 21+ years – 9 people</li> </ul>
--

**Attendees at the meeting live in Cooper:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Year round: 2</li> <li>▪ Seasonally 16</li> </ul>
--

**Why are you here tonight?**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make the coffee</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Voice the needs in Cooper</li> <li>• Get the Comprehensive Plan finished</li> <li>• Curiosity</li> <li>• Determine our own destiny</li> <li>• Information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be part of the community</li> <li>• Be aware and part of the future of Cooper</li> <li>• Get an update on what is going on</li> <li>• Keep the quality of life we have here</li> <li>• Perfect attendance on Comp Plan committee</li> <li>• Chance to win \$100 of fuel oil</li> </ul>
--	---

**What are Cooper’s “Treasures”...what makes Cooper, Cooper?**

(# VOTES for greatest significance)

<i>Natural</i>	<i>Built</i>
Cathance Lake ( <b>7 votes</b> )	Cathance Grange Hall ( <b>11 votes</b> )
Blueberry lands	Cooper Tower ( <b>1 vote</b> )
Cooper Hill ( <b>4 votes</b> )	Sand Pile ( <b>1 vote</b> )
Marsh on Route 191 ( <b>1 vote</b> )	Town Beach ( <b>5 votes</b> )
The Ponderosa	Red School House (East Ridge) ( <b>3 votes</b> )
Mill Pond ( <b>1 vote</b> )	The Ponderosa
Vining Lake ( <b>1 vote</b> )	Cemetery on East Ridge ( <b>1 vote</b> )
Big Inlet	Cooper Cemetery
Little Inlet ( <b>2 votes</b> )	Quest End
Howe Brook	The Store ( <b>7 votes</b> )
Hoggs Neck	
Sandy Beach	

A required element in any local Comprehensive Plan is a **Vision Statement** that summarizes the community's desired future community character in terms of economic development, natural and cultural resource conservation, transportation systems, land use patterns and its role in the region.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee base their Vision Statement on the following notes from the visioning meeting:

**What would you like Cooper to be? Its future Community Character ...  
in terms of economic development?**

- Slow planned growth
- Support agricultural community
- Cottage industry
- No big box stores
- Need community building for gatherings, for suppers, the Grange is our only option but it needs water and bathrooms
- More access to broadband to make telecommuting from home feasible
- A country store (we miss the old one badly) it was a community hub

**What would you like Cooper to be? Its future Community Character ...  
in terms of natural and cultural conservation?**

- Better forest management especially around the lake
- Less intensive cutting
- Preserve/maintain lake water quality (we have a strong lake association now)
- Continued stewardship of the lake
- Restore/renovate the Grange (built 1911)
- Consolidate community efforts to the Grange and a Town/Community building
- Obtain \$\$ for Grange acquisition
- Establish Grange as a historic site
- Retain manual blueberry harvest
- Public hiking trails

**What would you like Cooper to be? Its future Community Character ...  
in terms of transportation systems?**

- Full construction of Route 191 (status is currently "un-built") including fully paved shoulders; to allow walking and biking on Route 191
- Reclassify Route 191 to obtain more State assistance
- Post Route 191 until it gets fixed
- Lobby representatives to get state funds to construct Route 191
- Hiking and cross country trails with landowner agreements for access over private land
- ATV/snowmobile and bike trails available on old gravel roads (no gates cutting off access)
- Retain trail connections to larger network of trails in the region

**What would you like Cooper to be? Its future Community Character ...  
in terms of land use patterns?**

- Better forest management
- Slow planning growth (stewardship)
- More clearing for blueberries
- More residences but retain open space around lake and other sensitive areas including streams (Vining), Mill Pond, the Cranberry Flowage
- Maintain public access to lake
- Encourage cluster subdivision
- Support private landowner stewardship
- Encourage residential development away from the lake
- Coordinate with the Land Use Regulatory Commission and participate in the updates to their Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- Explore town assistance with land conservation using conservation easement technique
- Balance increase in the number of houses (for tax base support) with protection of lake water quality

**What would you like Cooper to be? Its future Community Character ...  
in terms of its role in the region?**

- Bedroom community to regional centers
- Agricultural base
- Recreational center
- Cleanest lake in the county/state
- Way-station (store; gas station) on Route 191
- Cottage industries
- Community center with cultural activities; a restaurant on the lake using local produce
- More of a community, more cohesion, spirit and community identification

The State policies that are found in the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act (30-A MRSA §4311 et seq.) are reproduced in this Appendix. The Act requires that a municipality will specify what approaches they will take to address them. The town of Cooper has tailored these policies to the specific circumstances of Cooper as they are raised in each of the major substantive areas (chapters) of this Comprehensive Plan. The town's policies can be found at the end of each chapter, in the body of the Capital Improvement Plan in the Fiscal Capacity chapter, and in the Land Use Plan that is mapped and described in the Land Use Chapter.

#### A. STATE POLICIES

1. to encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the State's rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.
2. to plan for, finance, and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development;
3. to promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being;
4. to encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens;
5. to protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas;
6. to protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas;
7. to protect the State's marine resources industry, ports, and harbors from incompatible development, and to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public;
8. to safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development that threatens those resources;
9. to preserve the State's historic and archeological resources and;
10. to promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.

Several lists of wildlife sightings are provided here by Karen Holmes, a seasonal resident intending to move to Cooper as her permanent residence in 2010. Karen tells the Comprehensive Plan Committee that she loves to hunt and fish and do educational natural science and conservation programs. She has extensive experience as an educator and documenter of natural history in bird, butterfly and biodiversity counts and migration assessments.

The lists below are all created from sightings taken from her property on Route 191, from East Ridge Road, or the logging roads in the woods in back of her house.

Karen observes that “Cooper is an important habitat for breeding, resting during migration, and wintering”. The biodiversity of the birds in the spring of 2007 is evident from many sightings of warblers, thrushes and vireos. She reports almost stepping on a ruffed grouse and her chicks and on a veery incubating her eggs in a nest on the ground. The bird list has 119 birds and still counting! She is also documenting the butterflies and moths for the ongoing Maine Butterfly Project.

<b><u>Mammals (seen or tracks found)</u></b>	<b><u>Reptiles</u></b>	<b><u>Amphibians</u></b>	<b><u>Butterflies and moths</u></b>
red squirrel wood rat muskrat snowshoe hare New England cottontail white-footed mouse house mouse vole short-tailed shrew Eastern coyote red fox moose white-tailed deer bobcat black bear beaver raccoon porcupine river otter short-tailed weasel mink fisher	ring-necked snake grass snake garter snake northern water snake brown (DeKay's) snake red-bellied snake	spotted salamander wood frog (hundreds were seen in the many vernal pools) green frog bull frog gray tree frog spring peeper American toad red-backed salamander	sphinx moth promethea moth mourning cloak butterfly white admiral red admiral Harris checkerspot clouded sulphur meadow fritillary summer azure roadside skipper cabbage white viceroy monarch common ringlet silver-bordered fritillary Aphrodite fritillary American copper common wood nymph inornate ringlet silvery blue Canadian tiger swallowtail Hobomock skipper Peck's skipper Juvenal's duskywing black swallowtail red-spotted purple

**Birds**

Karen used the “Field Checklist of Maine Birds”. They were sighted near her house, down the logging roads or swimming at the beach at Cathance Lake. They are cumulative so birds sighted in later years are not repeated if they appear on the earlier list.

<b><u>2007</u></b>	<b><u>2008</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>
Canada goose	American black duck	wild	Northern
ruffed grouse	mallard	turkey	shrike
great blue heron	hooded merganser		
turkey vulture	common loon		
osprey	Wilson’s snipe		
bald eagle	spruce grouse		
northern harrier	American woodcock (over 50 males doing		
sharp-shinned hawk	their aerial spring dance at the same time-		
Cooper’s hawk	awesome sight!!!!)		
northern goshawk	common nighthawk		
broad-winged hawk	yellow-belled sapsucker		
red-tailed hawk	Eastern wood peewee		
American kestrel	yellow-bellied flycatcher		
merlin	alder flycatcher		
killdeer	least flycatcher		
mourning dove	northern rough-winged swallow		
black-billed cuckoo	ruby-crowned kinglet		
great horned owl	blue-gray gnatcatcher		
northern saw-whet owl	Eastern kingbird		
chimney swift			
ruby-throated hummingbird			
belted kingfisher			
downy woodpecker			
hairy woodpecker			
northern flicker			
pileated woodpecker			
eastern phoebe			
blue-headed vireo			
warbling vireo			
red-eyed vireo			
blue jay			
American crow			
common raven			
horned lark			
tree swallow			
barn swallow			
black-capped chickadee			
red-breasted nuthatch			
brown creeper			
winter wren			

<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
golden-crowned kinglet veery hermit thrush wood thrush American robin gray catbird northern mockingbird European starling Bohemian waxwing cedar waxwing blue-winged warbler Tennessee warbler Nashville warbler northern parula yellow warbler chestnut-sided warbler magnolia warbler Cape May warbler black-throated blue warbler black-throated green warbler blackburnian warbler palm warbler bay-breasted warbler blackpoll warbler black and white warbler American redstart ovenbird northern waterthrush mourning warbler common yellowthroat Canada warbler scarlet tanager American tree sparrow chipping sparrow field sparrow vesper sparrow savannah sparrow song sparrow swamp sparrow white-throated sparrow dark-eyed junco Lapland longspur snow bunting rose-breasted grosbeak red-winged blackbird			

<b><u>2007</u></b>	<b><u>2008</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>
Eastern meadowlark rusty blackbird common grackle pine grosbeak purple finch red crossbill white-winged crossbill common redpoll American goldfinch evening grosbeak house sparrow Lincoln's sparrow			