

NATURAL RESOURCES

Water Resources Conditions and Trends

Rivers, streams, great ponds, aquifers and wetlands are all considered water resources. Public and private wells that serve as public drinking water supplies are also the focus of the Town's water resources inventory. Individual water resources were examined for ecological value, threats to quality or quantity and any documented issues related to water quality or invasive species. The Water Resources Map at the end of this section identifies the location of these resources in Easton.

Great Ponds

One of Easton's two great ponds is completely undeveloped and remains in its natural state. The only development is on Easton Pond. These great ponds do not appear on the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's list of watersheds most at risk from development. Developments occurring in watersheds that are on the list require additional standards for storm water runoff and site development. Keeping phosphorus laden sediments out of the ponds is the major objective of additional standards. The present level of development activity in the respective watersheds has not reached the point of damaging water quality in these ponds. Each pond is described below based on a survey conducted by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Bennett Lake

Bennett Lake is a small, shallow, spring fed lake with abundant aquatic vegetation. Summer water temperatures remain sufficiently cool to support brook trout. The lake was reclaimed in 1956 to allow intensive trout management. The barrier dam on the outlet, built to prevent undesirable species of fish from re-entering the lake, has washed out twice. Construction of a satisfactory barrier dam is infeasible due to lack of good sites available. Suckers and minnows have become reestablished in Bennett Lake and are competing heavily with brook trout. No known public access is available to Bennett Lake. The State Endangered Fries Pondweed grows in Bennett Lake (please see the rare plant section below for more information.) Bennett Lake has been partially zoned Resource Protection and partially Limited Residential under the Town's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

Easton Pond

Easton Pond is formed by a dam on Prestile Stream built in conjunction with the highway bridge at Easton. Although the pond is shallow, bottom water temperatures remain cool during most summers because of the inflow of cool water from Prestile Stream. Unfortunately, the pond contains large populations of non-sport fishes that are serious competitors with trout. Chemical reclamation would not be feasible because of the difficulty of treating the many miles of tributaries. Inlet spawning and nursery areas for trout are adequate to maintain the fishery by natural reproduction. The section of Prestile Stream above the dam also supports good resident trout populations. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife recommends the construction of a fishway in the dam to permit free movement of trout upstream into the pond and into stream areas above. Easton Pond has been zoned as a Stream Protection District as it is essentially a wide

spot on the Prestile Stream. The park located next to the municipal building is an important asset to Easton and Town officials are working to renovate and revitalize this area. This will be discussed in the Recreation and Open Space section.

Josephine Lake

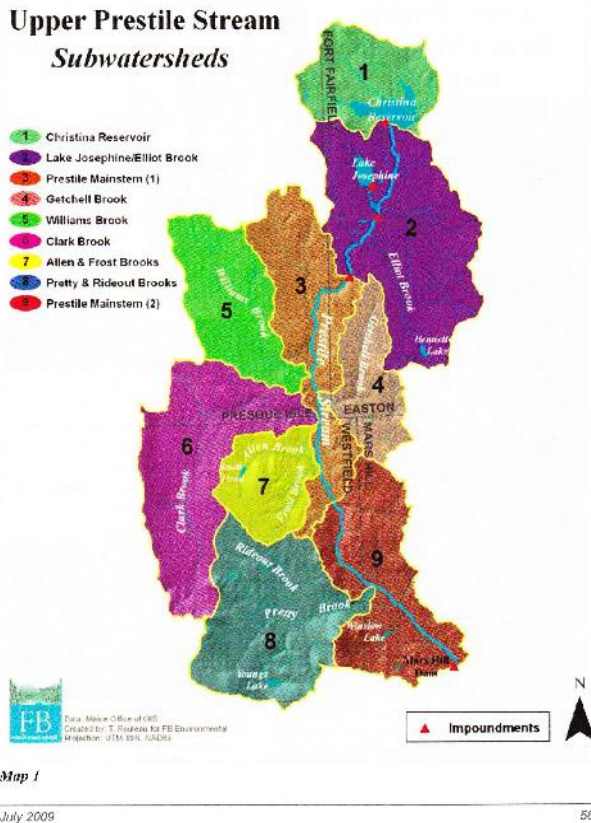
Josephine Lake serves McCain Foods and is a privately maintained waterbody with limited public access and in 2005 was determined to not be a Great Pond by the MDEP as it is a constructed pond as defined by NRPA. This area is a High and Moderate Value Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat (IWWH) and has been a popular (access by permission) hunting location. It is a shallow waterbody and has been zoned Limited Residential under Easton Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. Josephine Lake is a very popular bird watching spot in Easton while nearby Christina Reservoir in Fort Fairfield is popular with waterfowl hunters.

Lindsay Lake

Lindsay Lake also is not a Great Pond but has been zoned Resource Protection due to its wading bird and waterfowl habitat potential. Lindsey Lake has also been surveyed by IF&W. The waterbody is shallow with equal water temperatures at all depths during the summer. Trout maintain themselves during warm periods by seeking spring areas. Trout are very abundant in the outlet, Riviere des Chutes, but upstream migration into the pond is hindered by many beaver dams. Trout production is further limited by the presence of competing minnows and eels and marginal water quality. Any additional kinds of fish would provide more competition for trout.

Prestile Stream Watershed

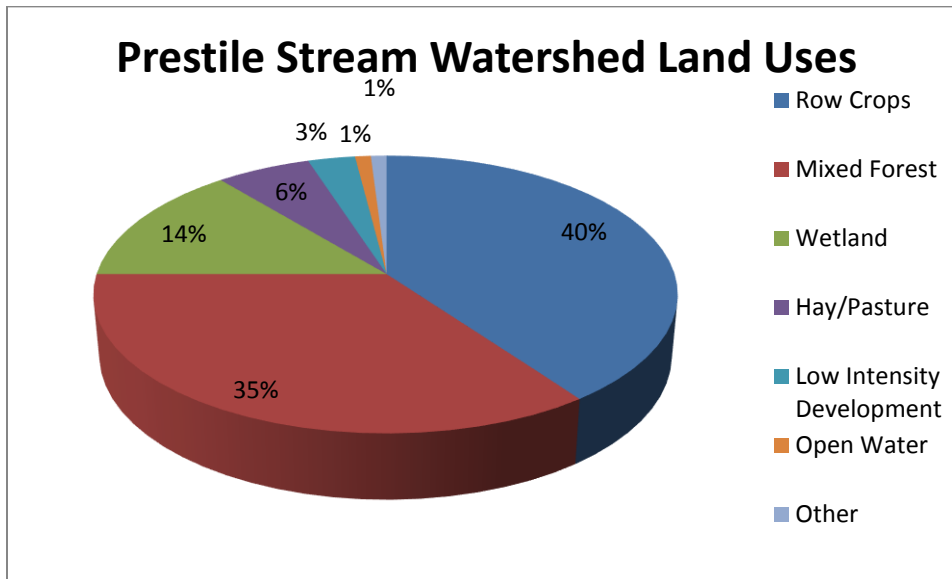
Christina Reservoir and 15.8 miles of Prestile Stream, which originates at the outlet of the Reservoir and terminates at the Mars Hill Dam, have both been listed as “impaired” by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) because of nonpoint source (NPS) pollution carried in stormwater runoff as a result of historic and present day pollution. These water bodies have been placed on DEP’s 2008 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies because of failure to meet their statutory Class A water quality designations. Prestile Stream violates Maine’s standards for aquatic life and dissolved oxygen. Causes of impairment are a direct result of industrial waste discharge and water withdrawals in the 1950’s and 1960’s and inputs of the insecticide DDT through 1972 and more so today from non-point source pollution, specifically nutrients in stormwater runoff. The Prestile Stream watershed is also identified as one of the 27 highest priority watersheds among the 55 streams listed on DEP’s Nonpoint Source (NPS) Priority River & Stream Watersheds.



In 2002, the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District (CASWCD) brought together a 40-member Steering Committee to write a watershed management plan. This plan was completed in 2005. Its primary recommendations were funding and outreach, assessment and monitoring, and nonpoint source action.

In 2008, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) contracted with FB Environmental Associates of Portland to conduct a *Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Report of Prestile Stream (& Christina Reservoir)*. The Prestile Stream TMDL study was based on sampling data collected between 1999 and 2006. The Report found that elevated nutrient loading and sediment accumulation contributes to the excess algae growth in the stream, which consumes oxygen during respiration and depresses DO levels. Excess soil runoff provides sediment that contains a mixture of nutrients, inorganic and organic material that stimulates algal growth and contributes to the hyper-abundant populations of macroinvertebrates. Dissolved oxygen (DO) increase and temperature measurements decrease from north to south. Phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment levels were elevated and macroinvertebrate populations do not meet state requirements for a Class A stream, indicating nutrient enrichment, sedimentation, and algal growth.

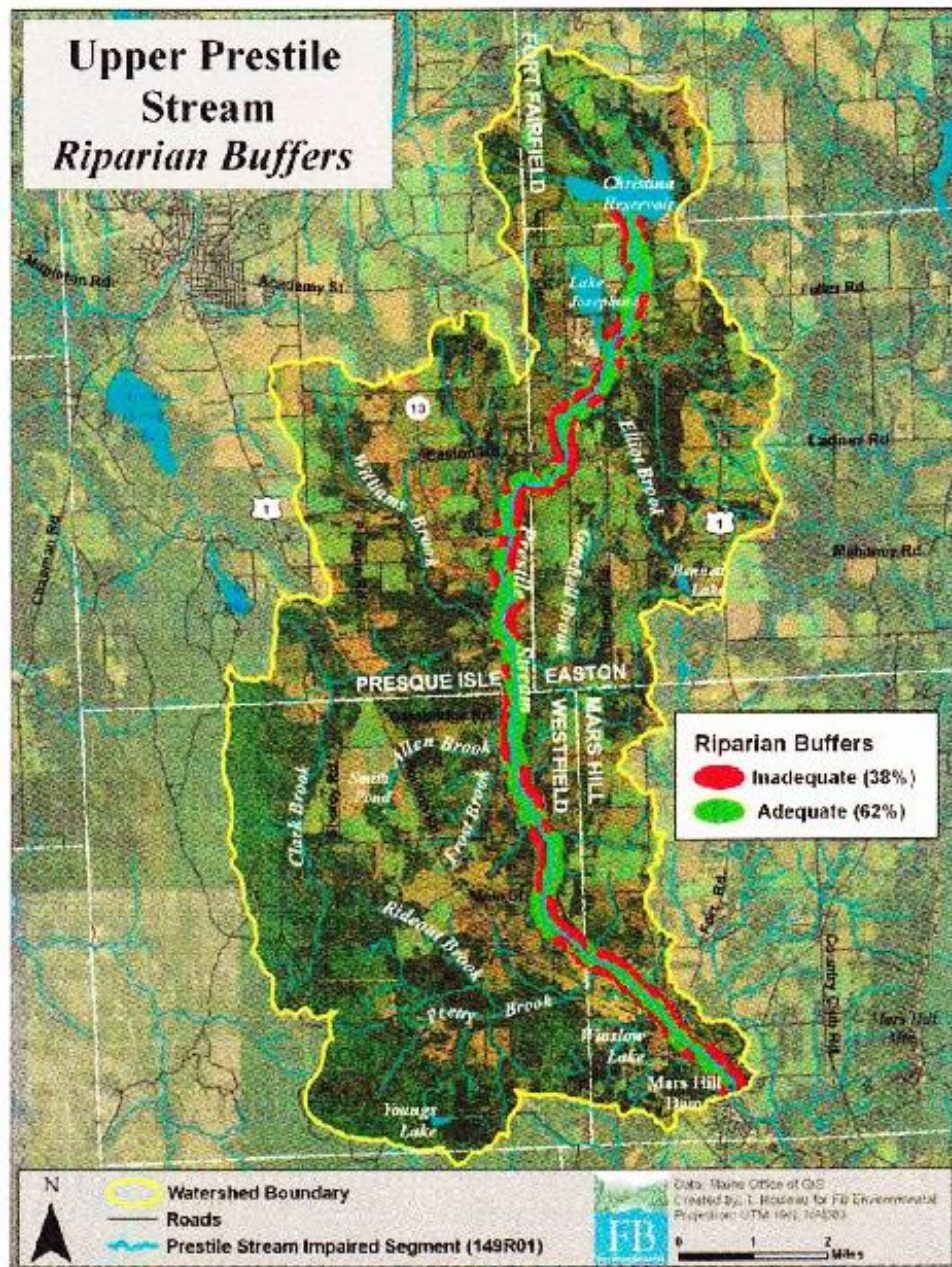
Agricultural land encompasses the largest land area in the watershed, making it potentially the greatest contributor of silt and nutrient enrichment to the stream. Nutrients have also accumulated over time in bottom sediments of the slow flowing and ponded stream segments and may be periodically released into the water column. Other sources of NPS include bare agricultural land; removal of riparian vegetation; poorly designed and/or maintained roads and culverts including gravel/farm roads, paved roads, and logging roads; logging debris left in streams; use of fertilizers; and animal/pet waste.



Source: F.B. Environmental Associates. Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Report: Prestile Stream (& Christina Reservoir), Aroostook County, ME. 2008.

According to the Report, “Cropland [which covers 6% or 20,028 acres of the watershed] is by far the largest estimated source of sediment and nutrients to Prestile Stream and its tributaries, accounting for a predicted 96% of the total sediment load within the Prestile Stream watershed. Cropland is also estimated to be the dominant source of phosphorus...while nitrogen loading is attributed to both groundwater and cropland.” The Report recommends a comprehensive subwatershed approach to manage “all potential nutrient and sediment sources with a major emphasis on implementing Best Management Practices [BMPs] on agricultural land.” Of particular concern is harvesting crops such as potatoes in the late fall, with no winter crop covering the bare ground until spring planting, leaving fields vulnerable to soil erosion from thunderstorms and heavy rain which carries nutrients and sediment to the Stream.

Other potential inputs stem from recreational activities such as ATV trails, poorly maintained septic systems, waterfowl, and the highly eutrophic Christina Reservoir “which has acted as a nutrient sink for decades.” In addition, there is concern that the former spraying of nutrient rich irrigation water from the Reservoir has saturated watershed soils, which eventually make their way into Prestile Stream. Approximately 6,088 acres (14%) and 610 acres (1%) of the watershed is wetlands and open water, respectively. These wetlands provide habitat for a number of unique plants and animals, and are considered one of the most productive waterfowl areas in the State – macroinvertebrates providing an important protein source for thousands of ducks and geese.



Map 4

July 2009

59

Unfortunately the majority of Easton stream corridor is described as having inadequate riparian buffers. The report recommends placing a strong emphasis on improving shoreland vegetated buffers to meet or exceed existing state guidelines “requiring that development is limited to the removal of no more than 40% of existing woody vegetation in the 250 foot wide shoreland zone of great ponds, rivers, and non-forested wetlands greater than 10 acres, and development, and within 75 feet of freshwater streams.

The formal designations of impairment and completion of the TMDL make the Upper Prestile Stream eligible for federal 319 funding. Other potential sources of funding include the DEP, Maine Department of Transportation, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service – Farm Bill, Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and New England Grassroots Environmental Fund.

Aquifers

According to the Maine Geological Survey, there is one sand and gravel aquifer of 286.5 acres located in the northeast corner of Easton. In the 1993 comprehensive plan, two aquifers were identified. According to the Maine Geologic Survey, the aquifer located on the Center Road was misidentified and current maps have been corrected. Presently there have been no known impacts to groundwater in the aquifer however, there is an active gravel extraction operation taking place. Town officials and the landowner should ensure that adequate protection measures are in place to protect this groundwater resource.

As of 2013, there are ten (10) public wells registered with the Maine Source Water Assessment Program as public water systems. A public water system is any water supply that serves 25 or more people a day or has 15 or more service connections, for 60 or more days out of the year. There are different types of public water systems based on the type of population served, i.e. residential versus commercial. A Final Source Assessment Report was prepared for each of these sites in Easton. This information is summarized in the table below. The evaluation criteria is based on well type and site geology, existing and future risk of acute contamination and existing and future risk of chronic contamination. Acute contamination means risk of contamination from pathogens and nitrate/nitrites, the distance the source is from risks, like septic systems and the ownership or control of the land where risks are located. Chronic contamination means risk of contamination from any four of 89 chemicals like gasoline additives or pesticides, the presence of contamination sources within the wellhead area and the ownership, control or regulation of land in the wellhead area.

| Name | Type | Source |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Easton Elementary School | 200 foot drilled | Groundwater |
| Easton High School | 200 foot drilled | Groundwater |
| Huber Engineered Woods | 483 foot bedrock well (120 G/m) | Groundwater |

| Name | Type | Source |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| McCain Foods | 76 foot gravel well (1000 GPM) | Groundwater |
| McCain Foods USA | 78 foot gravel well (700 GPM) | Groundwater |
| McCain Foods USA | 79 foot gravel well (700 GPM) | Groundwater |
| McCain Foods USA | 105 foot gravel well (700GPM) | Groundwater |
| Osgood Farms Homes | 400 foot drilled well | Groundwater |
| West Ridge Manor | 375 foot drilled well | Groundwater |
| Windermere Apartment | 65 foot drilled well | Groundwater |

Source: Maine Source Water Assessment Program, 2013

Potential Water Quality Threats

As of January 2, 2014, there are five (5) active underground storage tanks and 103 tanks have been removed in Easton. There have been ten petroleum spills in Town, most in the vicinity of the village and Prestile Stream. Town officials are also concerned that the increasing use of road salt during the winter months may be impacting groundwater. Town officials are particularly concerned with Richardson Road, West Ridge Road, Station Road, Route 10, and the Allen Road due to the close proximity of homes with drilled or dug wells.

There are two junkyards located in Easton, one of the Station Road and the other on Cleaves Road. The site of the current licensed junkyard located behind Josephine Lake is growing in size and beginning to concern Town Officials. There is also a closed junkyard located in close proximity to the Prestile Stream. Town officials will seek potential brownfield funds for the assessment and potential cleanup of these sites.

Town officials have also worked with the MaineDEP, under the Small Community Grant Program to identify and replace septic systems that are impacting water quality. Town officials continue to inventory failing systems and are in the process of surveying residents located near the Rivere du Chute and Prestile Stream. As a better understanding of the number of faulty systems is known, the Town will re-apply for funding.

Wetlands

The Beginning with Habitat (BWH) database provides National Wetlands Inventory information to interested parties and has identified 606 mapped wetlands in Easton totaling 4,075 acres. These extensive wetland resources represent five classes and four functions. Wetland classes present include Floating or Submerged Vegetation, Emergent or Emergent/Forested Mix, Forested or Forested/Shrub-scrub, Shrubscrub and Rocky-unconsolidated. Wetland functions include Runoff/Floodflow Control and/or Erosion Control/Sediment Retention, Finfish Habitat, Plant/Animal Habitat and Cultural/ Educational which may include wetlands with other values and

functions. These wetlands are distributed throughout the Town and provide multiple benefits to the community.

The ecological value of some of the Towns wetlands is documented in the BWH database as high value plant and animal habitats. Many of the Towns wetlands are considered Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat (IWWH) for waterfowl and wading birds. These freshwater habitats provide breeding and migration/staging areas for waterfowl and breeding, feeding, loafing, migration, or roosting habitat for inland wading birds. These special ecological values are one of the cornerstones of Easton's sustainability.

Easton has made progress in several areas of water quality protection over the years and continues to engage in practices that help mitigate sources of pollution. The town is working to repair and stabilize road ditching and working to address stormwater issues. Easton has participated in the DEP small community grant program for replacement of septic systems for many years. As a result, many sewer discharges to waters and road ditches have been eliminated and the town intends to continue to pursue this funding when they are available.

Efforts at monitoring water quality in Easton were detailed in the Prestile Stream section but have been sporadic in other waterbodies and no data could be accessed.

Water protection efforts are included in Easton's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. This ordinance speaks directly to water quality and applies to all activities within designated areas. The ordinance specifically prohibits the deposition on the ground or discharges to waters any pollutant that will impair the use of water or the water classification of any waters. The ordinance also includes provisions regarding erosion/sedimentation control and clearing and removal of vegetation and storm water runoff. Should the town consider the creation of other ordinances standards should be included that detailed erosion/sedimentation control, storm water management requirements and provisions for sewage disposal.

Town Officials have identified the need for timber harvesting, wetland identification, and stream crossing/cattle crossing education for the residents. According to the code enforcement officer, educating landowners who plan to conduct these activities will help eliminate many of the enforcement issues seen in Easton.

Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat

The abundance of Easton's prime agricultural and forest land soils is a good indicator of the town's potential to support wildlife. These areas, in addition to Easton's extensive wetlands and riparian zones, create the diversity of habitat types necessary for most of Maine's major wildlife species, i.e. moose, deer, snowshoe hare, ruffed grouse, waterfowl, and fur bearers. Populations of these important species are, in turn, influenced by the land use practices on both agricultural and forest lands.

According to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, much of Easton's agricultural land that is no longer in crop production provides excellent feeding areas for wildlife year-round. Cut-over woodlands also provide feeding areas and when they are adjacent to uncut

wooded conifer swamps with a high cedar component. These riparian zones provide important deer/moose wintering areas that are important to the welfare of these animals during the winter months. Bogs and wooded swamps have been recognized by the Maine Natural Areas Program as wildlife habitats that are not in great abundance statewide. Easton contains a substantial asset in this diversity of wildlife habitats and several areas have been identified as significant wildlife habitat.

Rare Plant Habitats and Occurrences

Rare plant habitats and the occurrence of individual rare plants have been identified at specific locations in Easton. There are four identified rare plant species that occur in many locations throughout the community, including Marsh Valerian, Swamp Fly Honeysuckle, Fries Pondweed, and Prairie Sedge. The Critical Resources Map, located at the end of this section identifies locations where these plant species have occurred.

The State Endangered Fries' Pondweed has been documented in Bennett Lake. This thin-leaved pondweed is only found in alkaline lakes in Maine and when last surveyed at Bennett Lake, in 1995, it was noted to be not abundant. Three rare plant species with the affinity for high pH (alkaline) soils were documented from the edge of a cedar swamp near the road crossing at Center Road in 1986: Prairie Sedge (State Threatened), Swamp Honeysuckle (Special Concern), and Marsh Valerian (Special Concern). The presence of these plants here suggest the possibility that other alkaline loving rare plant species could occur in this area.

Significant Wildlife Habitats

There is one Bald Eagle nesting area in Easton and is located north of the Cleaves Road on the Easton/Presque Isle townline. There is a 1,320 foot diameter Resource Protection district around this site.

The Upland Sandpiper is also located in Easton and is considered Threatened in Maine based on an estimated population of fewer than 200 breeding pairs. Upland Sandpipers are vulnerable to disturbance and habitat alterations affecting nesting success. Breeding habitat for the Upland Sandpiper has been declining in Maine for several decades and is now limited to intensively managed locations (such as blueberry fields) where the land management practices also favor Upland Sandpipers. The continued existence of this species depends on maintaining these types of areas.

Historically, Upland Sandpipers were considered a common summer resident in 13 counties in Maine associated with large agricultural fields and pastures. After 1950, widespread habitat change resulting from declining agriculture and increasing reforestation limited nesting habitat, and populations declined. In 1997, approximately 148 pairs of Upland Sandpipers occupied 57 grassland/barren sites in 8 counties. The Upland Sandpiper is listed as Endangered in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Ohio; as Threatened in Vermont and Rhode Island; and as Special Concern in New York. The species is also listed as a Migratory Bird Species of Management Concern in the northeastern U.S. by the USFWS.

The Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) is found primarily in the northern and eastern portions of the state, preferring extensive open marshes or grasslands. They are active day and night, hunting rodents by flying low over open ground. Upland Sandpiper and the Short-eared owl habitat has been identified just north of Josephine Lake.

Easton contains Inland Waterfowl / Wading Bird Habitat (IWWH) which are wetland complexes and a 250-foot-wide upland zone surrounding them. The quality of a wetland complex is determined by the dominant wetland type, the diversity of wetland types in the complex, the size of the wetland(s), the interspersions of the different types, and the relative amount of open water. This habitat was mapped in 2008 and protected under the Town's Shoreland Zoning ordinance.

Vernal Pools

There are no identified Significant Vernal Pools in Easton and a comprehensive statewide inventory has not been completed at this time. Significant Vernal Pools may be present within the town. Vernal Pools are naturally occurring, temporary to semi-permanent pools occurring in shallow depressions in forested landscapes. Vernal pools provide the primary breeding habitat for wood frogs, blue-spotted and spotted salamanders, and fairy shrimp and provide habitat for other wildlife including several endangered and threatened species.

Deer Wintering Areas

At the time of the writing of this plan, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) has not documented any high or moderate value deer wintering areas. These areas are rated according to their size, cover, food, and numbers of deer. Travel corridors typically follow major rivers or streams with adequate cover that allow deer to move safely to their required habitats. However, IF&W's regional biologists are in the process of identifying potential biological deer wintering areas. These non-regulatory areas possess existing habitat conditions suitable for deer and exhibit historical and/or current deer use. These areas may provide good opportunities for landowners interested in managing for deer, and Town Officials will work with the regional IF&W biologists to obtain information on any biological deer wintering areas within the town.

Scenic Resources

Easton's scenic resources are identified on the Critical Resources map. Areas identified include the top of Hersom Hill looking west, Center Hill, Keeny Hill, Graham Road, and most of the higher elevations located throughout the community.

Fisheries

Prestile Stream and its tributaries have long been recognized as a high quality brook trout fishery. Stocking of hatchery trout was conducted through the 1950's, but deemed unnecessary in the 1960's since natural reproduction of the wild brook trout population was enough to support the sport fishery. Each of the impoundments on Prestile Stream downstream of Christina Reservoir act as a trap for nutrients and sediments, adding to the diminished water quality above Mars Hill.

The Maine DIFW have documented both positive and negative effects of impoundments on the brook trout fishery in Prestile Stream. Electrofishing and gill net techniques were used to capture and count fish above and below the community impoundment in Easton between 1987 and 1990. Results showed higher numbers of trout and fewer suckers where the stream flowed naturally compared to low numbers of trout and high numbers of suckers caught in the impoundment. On the positive side, the dam at Mars Hill is now an important barrier in restricting the movement of small mouth bass (not native to the drainage) further upstream, which could negatively affect the native trout population.

When discussing the local fisheries resource it is essential to clarify the critical role that all of the town's streams, however minor, play in the health of the resource. Though all of them may not actually support brook trout populations, they serve to maintain the cold water temperatures necessary for healthy, viable populations. Brook trout become stressed in water temperatures above 68 degrees Fahrenheit for extended periods. Maintaining shade cover along all of Easton's 183 plus miles of streams will help keep water temperatures suitable for brook trout.

Town officials will work with landowners located along the town's streams and brooks in an effort to protect and preserve riparian habitat. Riparian habitat is important to help maintain water quality by preventing sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, pesticides and other pollutants from reaching the waterbody. Overhanging riparian vegetation keeps streams cool, this is especially important for Maine's wild Brook Trout populations. Riparian vegetation slows floodwaters, thereby helping to maintain stable streambanks and protect downstream property. By slowing down floodwaters and rainwater runoff, the riparian vegetation allows water to soak into the ground and recharge groundwater. Slowing floodwaters allows the riparian zone to function as a site of sediment deposition, trapping sediments that build stream banks and would otherwise degrade streams and rivers.

Stream Crossings and Culverts

In 2010, the University of Maine at Presque Isle (UMPI) completed a culvert inventory for the community. UMPI's GIS program mapped all of the culverts located in town and provided data on each. Concurrently, the StreamSmart program at Maine Audubon and MIF&W surveyed culverts and identified those which were blocking fish passage. Town officials are utilizing this data to upgrade and increase the size of culverts to improve stream flow and fish passage as part of their normal culvert replacement program. Town officials will prioritize stream crossings that have been identified as barriers to fish and wildlife passage. Town officials will apply for grant funding to replace these crossings.

Analyses

Easton's water resources are being well protected from point sources of pollution. Many years of participating in the DEP small community grant program has reduced point source impacts of sewage and the town maintains a waiting list to assist eligible property owners when funds are available.

There are several non-point sources of water pollution that have been identified in Easton including lot development by homeowners, agricultural uses including tillage and livestock and some logging operations by land owners or small independent contractors. The extent of the issue is not documented; however, the character of these issues is pertinent to how the Town responds. Whether or not a permit is required, many homeowners do not use erosion/sedimentation control for their projects. Education will help.

Issues with agriculture erosion and runoff are largely related to topography and major rain events that overwhelm conservation practices. Most often, conservation practices are in place on farms. There are a few instances of unrestricted crossing of streams by livestock. USDA programs exist to help with these issues. Non-point sources from small logging operations often relate to major rain events. The use of best management practices is sporadic and presently not required in the Shoreland Zoning ordinance. Easton is fortunate to have a USDA-NRCS office and a Soil and Water Conservation District office in close proximity. Their resources are available to property owners that request help. Requests must be direct from a land owner and not the Town.

Easton's non-municipally owned public drinking water supplies are not well protected from contamination risks. This is partially due to the owners do not control the land use activities within their respective well head protection areas of 300 feet. These sources are inspected by the Maine Drinking Water Program periodically and owners are required to test annually.

Partnering with regional advocacy groups in the area of water quality protection is possible. The Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District (CASWCD) office is located in Presque Isle. The District Coordinator can certify that local contractors have complied with BMP's for sedimentation and erosion control. The office also sponsors educational workshops that may include helping homeowners understand and implement BMP's. The CASWCD can also seek grants for special water quality improvement projects and water quality monitoring.

While development pressure on Easton's critical natural resources may be minimal, the lack of awareness of these resources keeps them under constant threat. Wetland areas classified as waterfowl and wading bird habitat have been subject to local shoreland zoning for decades. As such, they are probably the least threatened of the critical resources. The land use permitting process creates the mechanism for monitoring activities that may harm these resources. The placement of fill along the edge of wetlands is not uncommon in association with agricultural activity and road building and these activities are not closely monitored.

Other critical natural resources including the area north of Christina Reservoir are at greater risk because awareness has been lacking among the general public and local regulators including the planning board and code enforcement. Now that the BwH database is in place and the locations and importance of these areas has been identified it will be possible to include their consideration in conversations as development occurs. The Town should takes steps to more closely monitor land use activity that may affect its critical natural resources.

Easton's shoreland zoning standards are consistent with the revised minimum state guidelines. The ordinance was updated and approved by the Town on June 22, 2009. The Town may wish to review the existing zoning districts in light of the critical natural resource data. This could help

extend greater protection to these resources and 100 year floodplains. Town officials may want to review local shoreland zoning standards with those of the neighboring communities in the context of the designated districts. A joint review between planning boards of shoreland zoning districts near municipal boundaries might help identify the basis and agreement for more consistent zoning.

Easton has a few, very meaningful, opportunities to cooperate in the conservation of shared critical natural resources. The most important of these resources includes Prestile Stream. The Town should collaborate with neighboring communities along the Prestile to ensure consistency with shoreland conservation.

Agriculture and Forestry

Introduction

Agriculture and forestry help maintain the town's character and provide a steady and stable tax base. Agriculture has a stronger position economically in the community and there is minimal forestland owned by large companies with most of land associated with smaller landowners. As a result, issues regarding timber harvesting tend to be more regional or focused on a specific act of an individual landowner or independent logger. Both agriculture and forestry are a part of Easton's heritage. This legacy is still apparent in the landscape of town. Aroostook County's largest processor (McCain Foods USA) is located in the community, believed to be the only french fry processor on the East Coast, and the movement of potatoes to that plant is readily apparent throughout the community. Often travelers using the road system pass heavily loaded potato trucks that are bringing raw potatoes to the processing plant. And as such, french fries and other goods are trucked out of the community to markets throughout the northeast on a daily basis. There are still potato houses and a rail siding located along the major transportation corridors in town.

Easton has a clear image as a logging community with J.M Huber located in Easton's industrial area. The economic activity generated by the forest industry is very significant in Easton and includes excise taxes, personal property taxes, fuel, and multiple trucking and harvesting companies. Interestingly, most of Easton's woodlands are in small private ownerships of less than 1000 acres and many of the surrounding communities have similar characteristics. There are approximately 12 active timber harvest notifications submitted to the State annually that account for 150-475 acres harvested. The Town's forest land has great potential to be managed for many values to the community including water quality, wildlife and recreation. Many trees are also present in Easton's "urban" landscape and enhance quality of life and the beauty of the village area.

Tourism and recreation rely significantly on the access to these land resources and the wildlife and scenic qualities they create. While the number of farm families has declined, many familiar names are still actively engaged in farming and provide employment and economic activity. Easton has several soil types considered prime farmland/forestland soils that are of statewide importance. Farming's economic and cultural value to the community is widely known and appreciated by many residents. The protection of valuable farmland and active farms can help control rising property taxes and the cost of municipal services.

Overview of Topography and Soils

Topography: The Town of Easton consists of approximately 24,915 acres or 38.93 square miles. The town is relatively flat and could be considered gently rolling terrain but there are areas that have steep slopes. These are identified on the development constraints map located at the end of the Natural Resources section.

There are steep slopes throughout the Town with flatter areas located in the central area and the northwest. The River de Chute runs along the eastern border of the community while Prestile Stream runs through the center of Easton. Elevations range from a low of 425 feet near the shore of River du Chute in the southeast corner of town to a high of 885 feet atop Kinney Hill. Slopes range from 0 to 45% with most slopes in the less than 8 percent range.

Topography has influenced the Town's settlement patterns and agricultural uses. Most development has taken place along the major road corridors and has been in the flatter areas of Town extending from the along Center Road to the Presque Isle town line. About two thirds of the Town is covered by forest. Hardwood trees predominate on the ridges while spruce and fir are found in lower areas and in slight depressions on the sides of ridges. Many old fields and pastures have grown to early succession mixed wood stands. About 20% of the land area is presently used for agriculture. In 2012, the major crops are potatoes, small grain (oats, barley, buckwheat), and dairy/beef cattle. Other crops include maple sugaring.

Soils

Knowledge of the types of soils which exist in a community helps in planning land use activities. The various characteristics of soil types present different limitations for development, some of which can be overcome through special planning, design and/or construction. Soil types also affect agricultural practices and influence timber rates of growth. A composite soils map has been prepared for the Town based on information from Soil Survey Aroostook County, Maine, Northeast Part published by the United States Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service.

According to the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service there are six broad soil types found in northeastern Aroostook County with three occurring in Easton. These include:

- **The Caribou-Conant Association** made up of broad gently rolling upland ridges of till soils derived chiefly from shale and limestone.
- **The Mapleton-Conant Association** consisting of irregularly sloping shallow to moderately deep soils on till derived from calcareous rocks. Irregular relief is the outstanding characteristic of this soil association.
- **The Stetson-Allagash, Hadley-Winooski Association** consisting of soils formed in water deposited silt, sand, and gravel on nearly level to sloping floodplains.

There are eleven (11) distinct soil types in Easton. Of the 11 types, Caribou gravelly loam, Easton and Washburn silt loam, and Mapleton shaly silt loam make up the greatest proportion of soils with Caribou gravelly loam being one of the dominant soil types found in the region. Each soil

type found in Easton has characteristics that determine its potentials and limitations. These include prime farmland and woodland productivity.

There are eight (8) soil types that may be classified as prime farmland soils under certain conditions. Prime farmland soils produce the highest yields under generally accepted farming practices and require the minimal amount of energy and economic resources. Crop production also results in the least amount of environmental damage. Prime forestland is land that is capable of growing wood at an economically productive rate. A list of prime agricultural and forestland soils appears below. Many soil types are considered prime for both agricultural and forest production uses.

Farmland/Woodland Productivity Rating for Easton

| Map Unit Symbol | Map Unit Name | Acres in Easton | Percent of Total | Farmland Classification | Forest Production Rating |
|-----------------|--|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| BeB | Benson silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes | 194.2 | 0.9 | Farmland of statewide importance | Low |
| BeC | Benson silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes | 268.5 | 1.2 | | Low |
| BeD | Benson silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes | 162.8 | 0.7 | | Low |
| CgA | Caribou gravelly loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes | 18 | 0.1 | Prime Farmland | Very High |
| CgB | Caribou gravelly loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes | 5,424.6 | 24.7 | Prime Farmland | Very High |
| CgC | Caribou gravelly loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes | 1,924.1 | 8.8 | Farmland of statewide importance | Very High |
| CgC2 | Caribou gravelly loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, eroded | 430.8 | 2.0 | | Very High |
| CgD | Caribou gravelly loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes | 279.0 | 1.3 | | Very High |
| CgD2 | Caribou gravelly loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes, eroded | 222.3 | 1.0 | | Very High |
| CgE | Caribou gravelly loam, 25 to 45 percent slopes | 153.6 | 0.7 | | Very High |
| CoA | Conant Silt Loam. 0 to 2 percent slopes | 216.6 | 1.0 | Farmland of statewide importance | Very High |

| Map Unit Symbol | Map Unit Name | Acres in Easton | Percent of Total | Farmland Classification | Forest Production Rating |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| CoB | Conant Silt Loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes | 3,006.4 | 13.7 | Farmland of statewide importance | Very High |
| CoC | Conant Silt Loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes | 67.9 | 0.3 | Farmland of statewide importance | Very High |
| EaA | Easton and Washburn Silt Loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes | 3,457.3 | 15.8 | | Medium |
| EaB | Easton and Washburn silt loams, 2 to 8 percent slopes | 625.0 | 2.8 | | Medium |
| EsB | Easton and Washburn Stoney Silt Loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes | 33.2 | 0.2 | | Medium |
| MaB | Machias Gravelly loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes | 4.4 | 0.0 | Prime Farmland | High |
| Md | Made Land | 15.5 | 0.1 | | |
| MhB | Mapleton Shaly silt loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes | 1,396.4 | 6.4 | Prime Farmland | Medium |
| MhC | Mapleton Shaly silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes | 1,187.8 | 5.4 | Farmland of statewide importance | Medium |
| MhC2 | Mapleton Shaly silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, eroded | 133.6 | 0.6 | | Medium |
| MhD | Mapleton Shaly silt loam, 15 to 35 percent slopes, eroded | 199.9 | 0.9 | | Medium |
| MmC | Mapleton Very Rocky Silt Loam, 0 to 15 percent slopes | 122.6 | 0.6 | | Medium |
| MmD | Mapleton Very Rocky Silt Loam, 0 to 15 percent slopes | 290.8 | 1.3 | | Medium |
| Mn | Mixed Alluvial Land | 272.9 | 1.2 | | |
| Pa | Peat and Muck | 1,149.6 | 5.2 | | |
| SgA | Stetson gravelly loam, 0 to 2 percent slope | 8.0 | 0 | All areas are prime farmland | High |
| SgB | Stetson gravelly loam, 2 to 8 percent slope | 158.7 | 0.7 | All areas are prime farmland | High |
| SgC | Stetson gravelly loam, 8 to 15 percent slope | 76 | 0.3 | Farmland of statewide importance | High |

| Map Unit Symbol | Map Unit Name | Acres in Easton | Percent of Total | Farmland Classification | Forest Production Rating |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SgD | Stetson gravelly loam, 15 to 25 percent slope | 23.2 | 0.1 | | High |
| SgE | Stetson gravelly loam, 25 to 45 percent slope | 66.4 | 0.3 | | High |
| W | Water Bodies | 234.5 | 1.1 | | |
| Wn | Winooski silt loam | 34.8 | 0.2 | All areas are prime farmland | Very high |

Source: USDA, Northeast Aroostook County, Maine, Version 15, November 25, 2013

Trees grow faster on the soils of this association than on soils that have shallow depth to granitic bedrock. Tree roots enter cracks in the shale bedrock, become more firmly anchored and gain access to a larger supply of water. Much of Easton’s land area is considered to be productive forestland.

Conditions and Trends

Agriculture dates back to the 1850’s when the first land was cleared for farming in the area around Easton Center. The land area around Easton Center is classified as prime farmland and these soil resources are distributed town wide. Agriculture in Easton remains a healthy and viable enterprise. Farmers practice a wide variety of accepted conservation practices and are served by the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Cooperative Extension, and Agricultural Experimental Station. The Amish have been purchasing many of the smaller and oftentimes underutilized farms in Easton and have revitalized the small farming economy.

Markets for crops grown in Easton are available through McCains Foods and other processors located either in town or in the region. Changes in the market conditions need to be watched carefully and agricultural producers in Easton are well aware that they are part of a national and global market and subject to changes in dietary thoughts of the general public. This does not take away from the fact that Easton’s farms and farmland is an important part of the Town’s complex identity and economic sustainability. According to a land use map developed by the University of Maine at Presque Isle, there are approximately 5,000 acres of active farmland in Easton. The working landscape is imbedded in Easton’s character and embodied by the active farms that are present along nearly every road. The one or two roads that no longer have active farming still show the sign of the Town’s agricultural past. Active farms and farmland are located throughout the community with no one area showing a higher amount than the other.

Residential development in rural farming areas has been part of the local trend, especially near the Presque Isle town line and the village area. The table below shows the 2002, 2007, and 2012 Census of Agriculture summary for Aroostook County. Potatoes, small grain (primarily oats) and dairy and beef cattle are the major products on local farms. The production export from these commercial farms identifies agriculture as a local and regional economic engine.

Aroostook County Agricultural Data 2002-2012

| | 2002 | 2007 | 2012 | Percent Change |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Number of Farms | 1,084 | 1,246 | 895 | -17.4 |
| Land in Farms (acres) | 391,675 | 375,568 | 350,911 | -10.4 |
| Average Size (acres) | 361 | 301 | 392 | 8.6 |
| Market Value of Products Sold | \$121,158,000 | \$146,516,000 | \$210,517,000 | 73.7 |
| Average Farm Reporting Sales | \$111,770 | \$117,589 | \$235,215 | 110.4 |
| Government Payments | \$2,333,000 | \$2,779,000 | \$2,942,000 | 2.6 |
| Average/Farm Receiving Payment | \$4,312 | \$3,941 | \$6,472 | 50.0 |

Source: USDA 2002, 2007, 2012 Census of Agriculture Summary Report

The United States Department of Agriculture-Farm Services Agency (USDA-FSA, 2005) places the number of active “farms” in Easton at 186. In this case a farm is any land and owner that is eligible for and actively participating in USDA programs. Many of these “farms” may actually be woodlots and part-time farms that produce for local markets. The number of farms in Easton that actually produce for and sell into the commodity market is approximately 68. According to the Planning Committee there are four (4) potato farmers operating in town and two are actually landowners, other two are leasing land. Several of these farms may be considered a “Century Farm”, having been in the same family for more than 100 years. All of Easton’s farming operations, irrespective of acreage and production levels contribute to the local economy, tax base and help support conservation and recreation in the community.

McCain Foods has completed significant plant upgrades in recent years including a \$6 million digester, \$2.8 million CNG conversion, \$80 million freezer upgrade, and dedicated truck service. These improvements have made the plant far more efficient. However, their market is greatly dependent on the nutritional market, which in recent years has been less “potato friendly.” As a result, there have been reductions in the acreage being grown (20%) by contracted farmers and a corresponding decrease in the price per hundred weight offered (\$0.48 per cwt).

As stated previously, the Amish have purchased many of the fallow and vacant farms in Easton and are bringing them back into production. They are also producing dairy products who have also constructed a milking house located on the Grey Road for the storage of product. There has also been an increase in the number of small “home” farms that are producing beef, chicken, and poultry, mainly for their own use but also on a limited sale basis. There is currently a very strong market for grass fed beef.

Another growing opportunity in town has been the increase of berry farms, maple sugaring operations, and grass/hay farming. There are five (5) berry farms and 2 maple sugaring operation located in town which have been very popular with the general public. Lucerne Farms has also been producing high quality bagged forage for the equine diet.

Easton’s Forestland

According to the University of Maine at Presque Isle, approximately 12,344 acres of Easton’s land area is forested. This comprises about 50 percent of the town’s total acreage including softwood, hardwood and mix wood. Private forestland ownerships range from 10 acres to over 1000 acres. Many forested parcels are part of existing farms. There are no large “corporate” ownerships of forestland in Easton. Based on the number of parcels enrolled in the Tree Growth Tax Program which requires forest management plans about 1900 forestland acres are being managed. Both the State of Maine and the USDA-NRCS have offered cost incentive programs for private landowners to have forest management plans developed for their property. More acreage is likely being managed than is presently enrolled in Tree Growth. Private forestland is used extensively in Easton for snowmobile and ATV trails as well as hunting and fishing. Relatively few acres are posted. As such, Easton’s forested acres provide a broad public benefit. The trend in residential growth in rural areas has created a substantial forestland/residential interface. The Easton Fire Department is trained and equipped to fight wildfire and are available to assist the State of Maine with protection of the forest resource.

There are hundreds of forested parcels in town that comprise the roughly 12,344 acres of forest land. The Maine Tree Growth Tax Program requires that enrolled land be managed. Timber harvesting is occurring each year and includes both tree growth and non-tree growth classified woodlands. Tax records in 2012 indicate that 21 parcels totaling 1,881 acres are enrolled in the Maine Tree Growth Taxation Program. This number has increased slightly since the 2005 when there were 20 parcels totaling 1,496 acres. The table below identifies timber harvesting activity in Easton since 1991. On average 12 timber harvest notifications are filed each year in town and comprise about 300 acres. The acres harvested vary substantially from year to year. According to Maine Department of Conservation records, 124 acres of forestland in Easton has been converted to other uses since 1991.

Tree Growth in Easton, 2015

| Total Acres | Number of Landowners | Number of Parcels | Date Received |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1,788.64 | 16 | 18 | 9/29/15 |

Source: Maine Forest Service: 2015

For the most part, timber operations have been conducted within the current regulations and the Town’s shoreland zoning ordinance. Several issues have arisen which included road posting violations, speed on the Ladner Road, and the perceived amount of dirt left on roads from trucks hauling wood. These issues have been minor and taken care of when discussed with the landowner and/or timber harvester.

There have been two recent improvements made in Easton that significantly assists the region’s forest industry. J.M. Huber has recently completed mill upgrades that include a \$10 million upgrade and expansion of blades. This has greatly increased Huber’s efficiency and competitiveness in the global markets.

A second system upgrade is the increase in weight limits from the Canadian border to Huber. MaineDOT has allowed heavier Canadian weights on state roads which allows product from Canada easier access to Easton. Town officials are watchful of potential road deterioration issues.

Summary of Timber Harvesting for the Town of Easton

| YEAR | Selection harvest, acres | Shelterwood harvest, acres | Clearcut harvest, acres | Total Harvest, acres | Change of land use, acres | Number of active Notifications |
|------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1991 | 260 | 0 | 0 | 260 | 0 | 6 |
| 1992 | 264 | 15 | 20 | 299 | 0 | 7 |
| 1993 | 183 | 0 | 0 | 183 | 0 | 6 |
| 1994 | 200 | 0 | 0 | 200 | 0 | 7 |
| 1995 | 415 | 0 | 0 | 415 | 0 | 11 |
| 1996 | 474 | 0 | 0 | 474 | 0 | 19 |
| 1997 | 275 | 0 | 0 | 275 | 0 | 13 |
| 1998 | 313 | 0 | 0 | 313 | 2 | 13 |
| 1999 | 375 | 0 | 0 | 375 | 0 | 16 |
| 2000 | 155 | 0 | 0 | 155 | 0 | 17 |
| 2001 | 369 | 0 | 0 | 369 | 0 | 14 |
| 2002 | 170 | 0 | 0 | 170 | 0 | 9 |
| 2003 | 149 | 68 | 0 | 217 | 0 | 7 |
| 2004 | 131 | 43 | 0 | 174 | 0 | 13 |
| 2005 | 691 | 122 | 0 | 813 | 0 | 17 |
| 2006 | 401 | 4 | 5 | 410 | 0 | 15 |
| 2007 | 371 | 12 | 0 | 383 | 11 | 15 |
| 2008 | 364 | 0 | 0 | 364 | 22 | 20 |
| 2009 | 162 | 2 | 0 | 164 | 30 | 16 |
| 2010 | 248 | 2 | 0 | 250 | 55 | 14 |
| 2011 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 4 | 8 |

Source: Maine Forest Service, 2013

Community Farming and Forestry Activities

The Town of Easton and the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District are supporting community farming projects. The District is presently engaged in a project to develop a local producer cooperative and to create better access to locally grown foods in the community. Local farmers' markets have waned in recent years for lack of leadership and management. Interest among residents, in the market and local foods, has been present for decades. The project has potential to re-energize community agriculture by securing commitments from several producers and establishing the Farmers Market at the Aroostook Centre Mall in Presque Isle. The

reinvigoration of this market may allow local producers year round access to the local market and resident's year round access to local foods and other products.

There are also several beef producers in the region that are interested in developing a USDA certified slaughter facility. If developed, this slaughter facility could open up markets for the region's beef producers and provide them is a closer option for slaughter. Presently, producers wishing to utilize a USDA certified facility must ship their product to central Maine. Beef producers in the region have identified the following issues:

- There are very limited USDA Inspected facilities in the region. Producers have to travel to Charleston, North Anson, or other locations to have their beef slaughters and cut. This is time consuming, expensive, and may contribute to a lower grade of beef.
- There is limited cooler space available in the region. An older study identified space to hang approximately 40 head for 14 days. Producers prefer a 21 day hang time.
- Need a USDA Inspected Facility with quick freeze and cryovac. This facility also needs to have the capacity to hang a sufficient number of animals for 21 days or more.
- Facility needs to be centrally located.
- Pork/poultry needs to be considered.
- Scheduling for organic, all natural, and conventional farms needs to be considered.
- Need to ensure that there is some product available throughout the year. Downtime for slaughter operations is expensive.
- Need to look at the options of purchasing and expanding an existing business or constructing new. Facility needs 3 Phase power, water and sewer. Also needs to be located in an area that is receptive to the use.

The Amish community has purchased many of the underutilized or abandoned farms in Easton in the past several years. The Amish are utilizing many of the farms for livestock and vegetable production both for their own consumption and for sale. This reuse has had the effect of increasing the value of vacant farmland as well as providing residents and visitors an opportunity to purchase locally grown products.

Easton has also seen an increase in the number of smaller livestock and dairy producers. In some cases, these farmers are producing for themselves while others are selling to the general public. There is also a milk house located in town; a second is located in Fort Fairfield, with the wholesale producers selling to AgriMart.

Maple sugaring is also gaining popularity on Maine and in Easton. While no Easton specific data is available, Maine is now one of the largest producers of maple syrup in the United States, lagging behind Vermont and New York. According to the USDA (June 2013) Maine produced 450,000 gallons of syrup in 2013 with an estimated value of \$11,880,000 for an average of \$26.40 per gallon down slightly from the \$33 per gallon average in 2012. Maine has seen a relatively steady number of producers but the yield per tap has increased annually because of the vacuum system in place.

Analyses

Agriculture/Forestry Importance: Agricultural and forest resources have substantial economic and cultural importance in Easton. These resources provide economic activity, employment and recreational space for use by residents and support for tourism. The Local Economy section discusses this in detail in terms of location quotient analysis. It is clear that farming and forestry employment are more important in the local economy than in the state economy.

Overall, the agricultural and forest resource base is stable in Easton meaning that there is relatively little acreage that is being converted to other uses. Based on conversations with local officials, the amount of active farmland is growing, thanks to the influx of the Amish population into the area. This group has converted inactive farmland back into product uses.

Protection of Resources: The Town is not presently engaged in any regulatory or nonregulatory actions specifically designed to protect active farmland and productive forestland. Easton does not have an extensive regulatory framework that creates a basis for protecting agricultural and forest resources, and should consider creating some regulations as deemed necessary. Many feel the existing State and local regulations are sufficient for protecting these resources and threat to these resources is limited. There is concern among some in the community regarding the impact of agriculture and logging on water quality in the Prestile Stream watershed.

Participation by Easton's farm and forest land owners in any of Maine's current use tax programs is minimal. The Tree Growth Program is the most widely used accounting for about 15% of the Town's forested acres. The use of the Farm or Open Space Taxation Programs is nearly non-existent. Many agricultural and forestland owners have pointed out how damaging the State's Homestead Exemption Tax Program has been to owners of agricultural and forest resources by shifting that tax burden to these resource based properties. Unfortunately, this burden can only be offset by the property owner's participation in one of the current use programs. More education and awareness of these programs may help stimulate broader participation and long-term protection of these resources.

The trend toward increased residential uses in the rural farm areas is identified in the Land Use section. This trend, however, does not appear to have affected the conduct of agricultural or logging operations in the community. There are relatively minor issues between residential users and resource based users. There are two major reasons for this, many residential users still have connection to someone that works in logging or farming and many also use these resource lands for their recreation. Examples of issues on both sides include mud on public roads from trucks entering, damage to farmland and private roads from 4x4's, and isolated cases of runoff onto abutting property. Odor could likely become an issue if the practice of animal agriculture became larger and more widespread. Otherwise, the practice of farming and logging is widely accepted in the community and there have been few complaints.

NATURAL RESOURCES
Goals, Policies, Strategies

POLICY

Identify, monitor and conserve Easton’s significant natural resources including rare plant populations, moderate to high value nesting habitat for water fowl and wading birds, and bird species.

| Strategy | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|--|--|-------------------|
| Work with the Fort Fairfield and Mars Hill Planning Boards to ensure consistent standards for the protection of the Prestile Stream watershed. | Planning Board | 2016 and on-going |
| Cooperate with other local, regional and State entities in the conservation of natural resources of shared interest such as the Prestile Stream. | Town Officials, Planning Board, Highway Dept. | On-going |
| Continue to maintain land use standards that are consistent with the State minimums for local shoreland zoning. | Planning Board | On-going |
| Work with landowners that have Upland Sandpiper and Short-eared owl habitat and IF&W to maintain suitable habitat for these species. | Town Officials and IF&W | On-going |
| Seek assessment and clean-up funds for the cleanup of the towns closed junkyards. | Town Officials, Planning Board, and Code Enforcement | On-going |
| Work with homeowners on the Richardson, West Ridge, and Station Roads and Route 1-A for potential well contamination from road salt. | Town Officials | On-going |

Focus Habitats Conservation Policies & Strategies

Focus habitats, identified through the Beginning with Habitat Program, include riparian areas, high value plant and animal habitats, large habitat blocks and riparian and undeveloped habitat connections.

POLICY

Maintain and improve water quality, brook trout fisheries, wildlife habitat and habitat connectivity through the conservation of all riparian habitats.

| Strategy | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Work with the Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District to conduct educational meetings on the resource value of riparian habitats. | Town Officials | 2016 and On-going |
| Identify through the building permit review process when any development occurs within a habitat connector. | Planning Board | 2016 and On-going |

| Strategy | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Cooperate with IF&W and other State agencies to provide property owners with guidelines to voluntarily minimize impacts on habitat connectors. | Town Officials, Planning Board, and IF&W | On-going |
| Consider the need for amending Shoreland zoning to extend applicability and land use standards to specific activities within all riparian habitats. | Planning Board | 2017 |
| Support local research and encourage landowner cooperation with research on priority trust species. | Town Officials | On-going |
| Utilizing the University of Maine at Presque Isle's culvert inventory map, town officials will prioritize stream crossing that have been identified as barriers to fish and wildlife passage. Town officials will apply for grant funding to replace these crossings. | Town Officials | 2016 and on-going |
| Work with the Maine Aquatic Invasive program to obtain signage at the Easton Pond launch encouraging the public to clean the boats and trailers before and after launching | Town Official | 2019 |

WATER RESOURCES

Goals, Policies, and Strategies

State Goal for Water Resources

Protect the quantity and manage the quality of the State's water resources and to protect the State's other critical natural resources including wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitats, shorelands, scenic vistas and unique natural areas. (Local policies and ordinances must be consistent with and may be more stringent than applicable state laws.)

Local Goal for Water/Critical Natural Resources

To protect water and critical natural resources in manner consistent with the minimum requirements of state law while continuing to evaluate and understand unique local conditions that may require higher standards for protection.

POLICY

Help residents protect their private wells from contamination from faulty septic systems and fuel tanks.

| Strategy | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Continue to apply for Small Community Grant or other funds, such as CDBG, that replace faulty septic systems impacting water quality. Work with Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP) if homeowners qualify for their programs. | Town Officials | 2016 and on-going |
| Include a reminder about septic tank pumping at 3-year intervals with tax bills. | Town Officials, | On-going |
| Modify the building permit application process to include information on the age and condition of fuel tanks. | Planning Board | On-going |

| Strategy | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|---|-----------------------|------------------|
| Explore a property tax incentive for persons who demonstrate septic system maintenance. (Small reduction for a receipt from pumper) | Town Officials | 2017 |

POLICY

Protect the water quality of Easton's two Great Ponds (GP) [Bennett Lake and Easton Pond] from non-point source pollution from all land uses that generate erosion, sedimentation and/or phosphorus transport.

| Strategy | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|---|--|---------------------|
| Continue to update the local shoreland zoning ordinance to keep it current with the State minimum guidelines. | Planning Board | 2016 and on-going |
| Enforce the land use standards for all activities within the shoreland zone. | Planning Board and Code Enforcement | On-going |
| Provide educational seminars and literature for property owners who do their own site development work. | Planning Board and MDEP | On-going |
| Monitor and annually report land use permit activities within the three GP water sheds and assess the need to apply sedimentation and erosion control and storm water runoff standards. | Code Enforcement and Planning Board | On-going |
| Work with IF&W to explore the construction of a fishway at the dam on Easton Pond. | Town Officials, Planning Board, and IFW | 2017 |
| Continue to work with landowners to allow access to Josephine Lake for bird watching and waterfowl hunting. | Town Officials | On-going |
| Work with Central Aroostook Soil and Water Conservation District (CASWCD) to pursue grants through USDA, DEP, Maine Potato Board and University of Maine Cooperative Extension to develop educational programs for small and large agricultural producers and their role in non-point source pollution. | Town Officials and Planning Board | 2016 and On-going |
| Continue to work with the CASWCD to offer technical assistance to livestock producers to reduce their role in non-point source pollution. | Town Officials | 2016 and on-going |
| Continue to work with the CASWCD, NRCS, and MDEP to implement strategies identified in the <i>Upper Prestile Stream Watershed- Based Management Plan (2009)</i> . | Town Officials, Planning Board, and various Depts. | 2016 and on-going |
| Ensure that Easton's Highway Department staff or other contractors working on road and other construction projects are certified in erosion control. | Highway Dept. | 2016 and as needed. |
| The Town of Easton will continue to utilize best management practices (BMP's) for erosion control during town initiated construction projects. | Highway Dept. | On-going |

| Strategy | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|--|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Require future development, ATV trail construction, snowmobile trail construction and road (public and private) maintenance use generally accepted Best Management Practices during the construction and maintenance of the development. | Planning Board and Town Officials | On-going. |