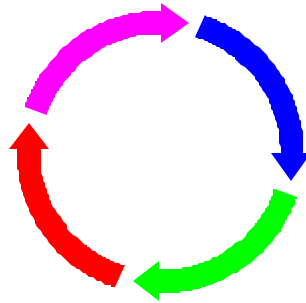


NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND  
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES  
IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT:

***LESSONS LEARNED***

October, 1997



*Some people see what is, and ask why?  
Others see what has never been, and ask why not?*

*[George Bernard Shaw & Robert F. Kennedy]*

For:

*The Ford Foundation*

*The New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine Community Foundations*

By:

*Elizabeth Kline*

**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES  
IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT: A FOUR YEAR ASSESSMENT**

*by Elizabeth Kline<sup>1</sup>*

**Executive Summary**

October, 1997

The Northern New England Sustainable Communities Project is one of the earliest experiments in building sustainable communities in the United States. It is a remarkably innovative project for the participating foundations: a large foundation (The Ford Foundation) partnered with three statewide community foundations (New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, and Vermont Community Foundation) to join the financial resources of a large foundation with the breath of scope and community-based orientation of the community foundations.

Six rural communities in northern New England were selected in mid 1993 by the community foundations to receive Ford Foundation funds and foundation staff assistance so that community practitioners could create environmentally sound economic development and strengthen their civic societies. These lofty goals were consciously implemented using a non-hierarchical model based on foundation staff people's belief in grassroots community building. Community practitioners defined their mission, projects, processes, and outcomes. Community foundation staff, who had already established relationships with some people in these communities, provided a philosophical sense of direction and overall fiscal management.

Over the four years, the vague concept of "sustainability" was slowly grasped and communicated in media stories, project descriptions, and people's daily conversations. Although the phrase is not commonly used, its meaning has been translated into measurable community results, such as new environmentally sound jobs, enterprises, and careers; public and private infrastructure improvements; strengthened and re-oriented institutions; new programs and projects aimed at creating and keeping wealth locally and enabling residents to stay rather than leave to survive; increased appreciation for and protection/careful management of natural resources especially as these resources contribute towards the communities' economic well-being and rural character; and political changes including new local and state policies, programs, laws, regulations.

A program assessment was published in January, 1996 and expanded in May, 1996<sup>2</sup>. One of its major contributions is a framework describing distinct phases of community building. The six communities were initially defined as a municipality (Hardwick, Vermont); geographical regions (the

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<sup>2</sup>Northern New England Sustainable Communities Implementation Project: An Evaluation by Elizabeth Kline. This document contains analyses plus six case stories. Each of the six communities are described. Available for \$5 from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation in Concord, NH

greater Farmington Maine region; a portion of the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont in the vicinity of Concord; the Mt. Washington Valley region of New Hampshire; and the STA-NORTH area of New Hampshire which consists of Groveton/Northumberland, Stark, and Stratford); and an ecosystem (Cobscook Bay, Maine). They fit into one of four phases: Jump Start, Plugging In, Identity through a Regional Context, and Strength through Connections and Partnerships.

By understanding where a community fits at particular time, practitioners and funders can figure out which strategies, actions, indicators, and results are most appropriate and reasonable. What works in one phase will not, necessarily, apply to another one. Although the six communities have evolved since the 1996 assessment, they still can be categorized according to the four phases of community building. For example, the Concord, Vermont Project is now called the Northeast Stewardship Project and has progressed from the “Jump Start” to the “Plugging In” phase.

The current assessment focuses on four broad topics to gain a more in-depth understanding of what aspects of community building work and do not work and why. These issue areas -- community results, civic capacity/human capital, economic development, and political influence -- were chosen by the evaluator because they are of current interest to funders, practitioners, and researchers.

The major finding is the overwhelming importance of *community capacity building* as the foundation for achieving constructive results. Quantifiable and qualitative accomplishments in community improvements, such as reducing poverty, creating local wealth, and restoring the environment, are tied directly to individuals’ and communities’ ability to develop trusting relationships, nurture leaders, and establish effective organizations.

The nature, extent, and longevity of these results vary from community-to-community and depend on its phase of community building. Quantifiable results are most notable in communities which are the most sophisticated in capacity building -- those with seasoned leaders, opportunities for training and educating emerging leaders, effective institutional structures, and widespread public involvement and support. Qualitative results, such as a change in mindset and attitude, are more likely to be the first evidence of change in communities which are the most isolated, resistant to change and to outsiders, and have limited “human capital” from which to draw.

Although no sustainable community project reaches a definitive end point, each of the six communities provides evidence of progress towards this goal. The most tangible accomplishments come from communities where people define clear directions, build capacities, and produce incremental project results designed as stepping stones for future initiatives.

# NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT: A FOUR YEAR ASSESSMENT

*by Elizabeth Kline*

## **Detailed Summary**

October, 1997

### **BACKGROUND**

The Ford Foundation, through a partnership with the New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont Community Foundations, enabled six rural “communities” in Northern New England to be funded for four years to help them become more environmentally sound, economically viable, and more effective civic societies (e.g., “sustainable”). After a feasibility study was completed, overall project implementation goals were defined in 1993 as: (1) support communities to enhance their long-term economic viability while preserving or enhancing their environmental quality; (2) expand the capacity of community foundations to partner with rural communities to achieve sustainable economic development; and (3) develop new understandings about how this kind of development can work in rural communities.<sup>3</sup>

Staff from each of the statewide community foundations chose two “communities” for this project, based on their own values, interests, and experiences. At that time, the communities were defined as a municipality (Hardwick, Vermont), four geographical regions (the Western Mountains/Greater Farmington, Maine region; Southern Essex County in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont; the Mt. Washington Valley of New Hampshire which includes the Conway/North Conway corridor; and the STA-NORTH area of New Hampshire, which consists of Groveton/Northumberland, Stark, and Stratford), and an ecosystem (Cobscook Bay, Maine). Many (but not all) of these communities are small (populations in the hundreds and thousands), relatively poor as compared with other communities within their states, rely primarily on natural resources-based economies, and have been economically depressed for some time.

The Northern New England Sustainable Communities Project was loosely tied together by an advisory committee, but was mostly conceived and implemented as separate community-based and foundation-guided efforts. Community foundation staff chose their two communities based on places where some relationship was already established. No other overall project criteria were developed to select the communities and no specific overall project goals, objectives, and outcomes were identified to measure results across communities or among community foundations.

Rather, the community foundation staff agreed that each state would act independently but share a common model designed as a “hybrid” incorporating grassroots decision-making in the communities with oversight from the outside by the community foundations. Community practitioners had control over vision, projects, and process, while the community foundations maintained accountability to ensure a focus on the project’s implementation goals and overall fiscal responsibility. This model was,

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<sup>3</sup>July, 1994 Proposal letter from Tom Deans, Vice President of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and lead person for the community foundations to Janet Maughan, Ford Foundation Project Officer.

consciously, neither entirely grassroots nor outside driven since the community foundation staff did not believe in a hierarchical model and valued practitioners' expertise and contributions.

## **INTERIM ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

An interim assessment was completed in January, 1996 and expanded in May, 1996 as these projects reached the half-way milestone in their four year funding phase.<sup>4</sup> Ten key lessons were described:

1. For economically hard-pressed rural towns and cities, the entry point into sustainability is community betterment.
2. Excitement, volunteer support, and progress comes from working together on specific projects.
3. Projects reflect an integration of economic, environment, social, and community building components.
4. Environmental values and practices come from individuals participants' beliefs and contributions.
5. Civic capacity/social capital is being created.
6. Results are achieved even in a short time period.
7. Foundation funds are used to leverage additional resources.
8. A sense of hope and community identity is being fashioned.
9. Gradually, people in the affected towns and cities are demonstrating support for sustainable community projects.
10. The community foundations have played a significant role in nurturing, overseeing, guiding, and providing financial and technical assistance. The foundations chose different strategies, producing different lessons learned.

In addition to these specific findings, the assessment concluded that communities are at different phases of community building. Like individuals, communities can be distinguished by personalities and character traits. Based on the six communities analyzed, four phases were described: Jump Start, Plugging In, Identity through a Regional Context, and Strength through Connections and Partnerships. Each community's case story was told.

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<sup>4</sup>"Northern New England Sustainable Communities Implementation Project: An Evaluation" (January, 1996) available from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation in Concord, NH

## Phases of Community Building

<i><b>Jump Start</b></i>	<i><b>Plugging In</b></i>	<i><b>Regional Identity</b></i>	<i><b>Collaborations</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no sense of community identity;</li> <li>• no “community” leaders;</li> <li>• few volunteers with an interest to do something;</li> <li>• very limited institutional resources;</li> <li>• often depressed or stagnant economies;</li> <li>• often dependent on single employers;</li> <li>• dependent-type “personalities”;</li> <li>• adverse to change;</li> <li>• hostile to new ideas;</li> <li>• perceive people as “outsiders” or “flatlanders” unless born there;</li> <li>• “old buddy” power base;</li> <li>• very limited or no community financial resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• small core group who have their “act together” and developed a “sense of direction”;</li> <li>• some type of organization (may be informal or formal);</li> <li>• emerging sense of community identity within that core group;</li> <li>• limited awareness of community needs and interest in generating community-based project ideas; desire to expand base of volunteers, members, supporters;</li> <li>• no threat to political power bases;</li> <li>• few community resources (mostly donated)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• effective community leaders;</li> <li>• strong institutional organization;</li> <li>• on-going community-based projects which link to people and issues outside the community’s boundary but affect people and natural resources within the community;</li> <li>• desire to create a regional identity based on some boundary (e.g. watershed, bay, valley, geographical grouping);</li> <li>• many volunteers;</li> <li>• significant public identity and recognition;</li> <li>• some political stature, through working primarily with people who have power;</li> <li>• diversified economy;</li> <li>• welcome new ideas and newcomers;</li> <li>• many “assets” to draw upon especially from within the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• realization that community’s agenda is furthered by joining with other organizations, groups, individuals who have separate agendas but can “add value” by partnering on projects;</li> <li>• many well-established and effective organizations;</li> <li>• interlocking members on boards;</li> <li>• large number of volunteers;</li> <li>• clear sense of community identity;</li> <li>• focus on the interconnections of issues and multi-issue oriented;</li> <li>• access outside financial and technical resources, including from distant sources;</li> <li>• complex community fabric;</li> <li>• widespread public support and involvement;</li> <li>• training and educational opportunities for emerging leaders, volunteers;</li> <li>• have developed political clout</li> </ul>

Each community was labeled based on its dominant characteristics at the time. Some of the six communities have changed into another phase two years later. For example, the Concord, Vermont Project typified the earliest phase of community building in 1996. “It is a tale of people trying to jump start a process, break from a mentality of collective depression, and confront their realities.”<sup>5</sup> However, the Northeast Stewardship Project as it is now titled fits the “Plugging In” phase because of its established core organizational base, its emerging image and credibility within the community, and its projects aimed at broadening its audience. Its latest initiative to develop a regional natural resources center may propel this group into the regional identity phase.

Cobscook Bay (Maine) and Mt. Washington Valley (New Hampshire) projects were entering the regional identity phase by design in 1996 and have achieved substantial results by mid 1997. Media reports, project titles and activities, attendance at events located in other communities, and recognition of shared problems and willingness to work together on common solutions are some of the indicators of such an identity. Both regions are defining their boundaries by natural ecosystems. The Mt. Washington Valley Project is evolving into the fourth phase through its increasing number of partnerships and collaborations with people and organizations within the valley region.

Western Mountains Alliance and its Sustain Western Maine Project has intensified its investment in building significant and long-standing collaborations and partnerships. Not only do individuals and organizations choose to work together on projects, but they also define the nature of their interests and tailor responses to fit multiple agendas. Their strategy is to create synergetic results; they are not limited by an approach which seeks to get others to join in their defined projects or tasks.

The one community project which has not moved beyond the start-up phase in community-building is STA-NORTH. There has been a high rate of attrition among the committed, hard-working practitioners primarily due to frustration and “burn-out” from unsuccessful efforts to broaden the community support and engage people in the STA-NORTH communities. There continues to be, particularly in Groveton, a gap between people who have lived in the communities all their lives and the “newcomers”; many people maintain that efforts to improve life in the community will continue to be unsuccessful because there is a perception that “this is the way it has always been” leaving little incentive to become involved in STA-NORTH; and, finally, the purchase of the mill by Wausau Paper Company has restored lost jobs.

## **CURRENT ASSESSMENT’S ORIENTATION**

This assessment analyzes lessons learned throughout the entire project implementation period. A number of key lessons learned can be derived from analyzing the six very different community experiments and the three independent community foundations. Information is presented in this summary narrative and in six charts (illustrating changes in each community from mid 1993 to mid 1997).

The current assessment revisited the lessons learned and found that all of them are still valid. To gain a more in-depth understanding of what aspects of community building work and do not work and why, the evaluator chose to focus on four broad topics -- community results, civic capacity/human capital, economic development, and political influence. These issue areas were selected because they are of current interest to funders, practitioners, and researchers.

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<sup>5</sup> “Concord/South Essex County Vermont: A Community in Formation: The Jump Start Phase” (p. 1) in Northern New England Sustainable Communities Implementation Project: An Evaluation.

## Key Findings

### **MODEL**

- ***Partnership Benefits***

Guidance and oversight from the community foundation staff ensured that community projects dealt with “sustainability” issues rather than relied on traditional economic development, environmental protection, and/or social service objectives, strategies, and techniques. A large foundation like the Ford Foundation gained effectiveness through its partnership with the three statewide community foundations from the staff’s proximity, familiarity, on-going relationships, and financial oversight. Moreover, by linking with three particular community foundations the project gained a breath of perspective (e.g., these institutions are not single-issue focused but deal with the variety and range of concerns of the communities within their states) as well as a “neutral” forum (e.g., are not viewed as advocates of particular agendas).

Examples:

Marion Kane from the Maine Community Foundation attended committee meetings in Farmington and Cobscook Bay; provided written materials to staff and other community practitioners on the concepts and practices of sustainability; pressed practitioners to develop sustainable community indicators; and early on encouraged visits to other sustainability projects such as to Willapa Bay. As described by Dianne Tilton from the Sunrise County Economic Council, Marion “forced everyone to go through the process of understanding what sustainability means and to go through an indicators process seriously. All winter we spent meeting regularly [in Cobscook Bay] to talk about how to measure environmental quality, economic success, community betterment” (Telephone interview on May 29, 1997).

Tom Deans from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation constantly encouraged the Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council members to think non-traditionally. He spoke out at meetings; communicated often with board officers; and used his position of respect in the community to advocate for sustainable development. He was the leading promoter of using sustainability criteria in allocating revolving loan funds (Interviews on May 21 and 22, 1997).

- ***Empowerment with Responsibility***

Delegation of decision-making to community practitioners was “real”, i.e., projects evolved over time rather than were conceptualized in a proposal at the outset; practitioners developed their own missions, agendas, projects, strategies, and were held accountable for expenditure of foundation funds; and no matter how much practitioners struggled, groped, and fought, they were the ones who had to confront their problems and figure out what to do.

Examples:

Eddie Gale's approach is to work with people in communities rather than create and promote his own action agenda. As a result, the two Vermont projects evolved slowly and organically. People took months to get to know each other, develop trust, and explore project options before they invested in building organizations (e.g., Hardwick Business Community chose never to become a formal institution). Learning mistakes were made (e.g., hiring of an outsider from Burlington, Vermont to staff the Northeast Stewardship Project) with the knowledge and support of Eddie Gale because he wanted them to make the decisions (Interviews since 1995; Findings described in the January, 1996 Evaluation).

Marion Kane was so committed to the delegation of responsibility approach that she gave the funds to the Cobscook Bay group upfront before they had organized. This strategy did not work since people fought over how to spend the funds rather than on what they wanted to accomplish. She realized her mistake and took fiscal control back, but was undeterred in her belief that community practitioners need to struggle and make judgments for themselves. The problem was timing -- they were not ready for such responsibility so early on in the project (Interviews since 1995; 1996 Evaluation)

## **APPROACH**

- ***Three Distinct Approaches to Community Building***

Although all three community foundations used the hybrid community building model, they chose three distinct approaches to implement that model: New Hampshire Charitable Foundation focused on organizational-building; Vermont on mentoring/nurturing; and Maine on capacity building, especially of emerging leaders.

Examples:

Tom Deans and Pat Vasbinder used the organizational-building model, investing in two places which had organizations in existence prior to the Ford Foundation grant. Tom Deans played an active role in helping the Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council build an effective, regional institution whose mission became sustainable development. He recruited board members, networked with his extensive contacts within the region, added his personal "stamp of approval" to council activities, and helped get the transportation grant to build a multi-purpose pathway paralleling Route 16 (Advisory Committee meeting, August 25, 1997). According to President Dave Sorensen, Tom Deans is "an incredible asset. He continuously reminds us of funding opportunities; he pollinates by telling us what is working elsewhere; he is a great PR person (People see us in a much more positive light); and he is brilliant -- he has great insights and sees the larger picture" (Interview on May 22, 1997).

Eddie Gale used the "friendly schemer" model, as he calls the nurturing/mentoring approach. He spends a lot of time in the communities, participating in meetings, talking to people, helping people write

and type grant applications, suggesting techniques and providing practical knowledge about running meetings, creating budgets, hiring staff, and selecting board members. Jim Wood, the part-time staff person for the Northeast Stewardship Project and Will Staas, chair of the board, welcomed Eddie's personal involvement style. "We needed an Eddie to be a hands-on person because we were groping too much. It was a good fit for us" (W. Staas, telephone interview June 20, 1997). "He was there to say you can do this. Don't worry about the money in the short-run. The goal has never been to sustain the Northeast Stewardship Project as an organization" (Telephone interview with board member on June 20, 1997).

Marion Kane chose Cobscook Bay and the greater Farmington, Maine regions because of the existing and potential leaders in those places. Her model is community capacity-building with a priority on finding, nurturing, and supporting leaders. She points to Dianne Tilton and Will Hopkins in Cobscook Bay and Warren Cook and Scott Planting in Western Mountains Alliance as key community leaders whom she cultivated and relied on (Interviews since 1995; Advisory Committee meeting on August 25, 1997). She selected these people and provided them with her personal and institutional blessing as well as with technical information. For example, the Maine Community Foundation accepted federal funds and acted as the fiscal agent for the Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project, initiated by Will Hopkins (Telephone interview on June 12, 1997).

- ***Each Approach has an Appropriate Use***

Each approach seems to have validity and can be used effectively at different stages of community building. Early on when practitioners are starting to form sustainable community projects, where institutions are lacking or inadequate, and in situations where practitioners are learning how to take responsibility, the mentoring/nurturing approach is valuable. Emphasis on capacity building is essential when it is useful to reach beyond the few initial participants, draw on the expertise and resources of many sources, attract volunteers and contributors, and achieve tangible results. At times, individuals and groups need to legitimize themselves through organizational identities and structures.

Examples:

The two Vermont projects and the STA-NORTH project in New Hampshire typify communities in early stages of community building. When the Ford Foundation Northern New England Sustainable Communities started in 1993 there were no organizations in Hardwick or Concord, Vermont and a small organization (STA-NORTH Economic Development Corporation formed a year earlier). Eddie Gale's personal investment of time, technical guidance, and psychological support fit the circumstances. As chair of the Northeast Stewardship Project Will Staas' said: "None of us had time to do what he did" (Telephone interview on June 30, 1997). John Irwin, board member, declared that "The only way to do business is the hands-on, field experience. We are too independent to want someone telling us what to do" (Telephone interview on June 24, 1997).

The decision by the NH Charitable Foundation to focus attention within STA-NORTH on organizational building and provide assistance from staff based in Concord proved, in hindsight, an unsuccessful strategy for community building in the STA-NORTH towns. This may have been influenced by several factors: STA-NORTH had been organized prior to the Northern New England

Sustainable Communities project in an effort to respond to a possible economic crisis in the region if the Groveton mill closed. When the mill was purchased and it became clear that the loss of jobs was not imminent, the mission of STA-NORTH needed to change. The transformation of the organization from a crisis-response team to a community building organization, however, was never fully executed. An organizational-building strategy focused energy on the processes of STA-NORTH rather than on building community capacity.

The strong “native” vs. “newcomer” culture that exists in STA-NORTH communities is a significant factor in the inability of the organization to reach deeply into and build capacity in the communities. NHCF staff, though attentive to STA-NORTH members, was perceived as an “outsider”. Further, many involved in STA-NORTH including the President and staff, were considered to be “newcomers”. Efforts to bring this gap between the two groups such as the committee organized for the planning of the Crafters Market, have to date, been unsuccessful.

The Cobscook Bay project provides examples of the appropriate timing and use of the capacity-building model. Marion Kane picked Dianne Tilton and Will Hopkins as leaders and gave them special attention (Telephone interviews with community practitioners on May 7, June 4, June 12, June 17, and June 19). For example, Dianne Tilton was given a \$500 scholarship by the Maine Community Foundation to attend an 8 session leadership training course offered through the University of Maine at Machias. There she learned about skills building and strategic thinking (Telephone interview on May 7, 1997). Dianne Tilton credits an emphasis of capacity-building as the vehicle which opened up her mind and changed her way of thinking. “I am now a misfit because I’m no longer a traditional economic development person. My ability is to get people to work together. This sounds basic and trite, but it isn’t the norm around here. I plant seeds...look outside boundaries...make suggestions” (Telephone interview on May 7, 1997).

At some point in their development, community groups need to become effective organizations. Cobscook Bay has effective leaders and on-going projects; however, it lacks a community organization. Dianne Tilton operates from her position as a paid staff person from the Sunrise County Economic Council. The community group, Sustainable Cobscook Community Alliance, went out of business in January, 1997. On the other hand, the Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council began in 1991 and had sufficient cohesion by 1993 to evolve into an organization that is well-managed by volunteers and well staffed. All board positions are filled. Monthly board meetings are well attended. For example, 25 members attended the May 21, 1997 board meeting, each sitting behind their printed name tags. “At the end of meetings, people stick around and talk”, indicating that these busy people enjoy the gatherings and find the networking and intellectual exchanges useful (Interview on May 22, 1997).

Although the community foundation approaches can be neatly categorized, in practice the foundation staff tend to emphasize an approach but use the other orientations. For example, Tom Deans is a consummate networker and, therefore, assists the Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council practitioners in personal and group capacity-building as well as in organizational development.

## **COMMUNITY RESULTS**

- ***Different Entry Points for Building Sustainable Communities***

The term “community results” reflects the finding that communities have different entry points for galvanizing attention, support, and actions. Economic development is the top priority of all six communities, although its definition evolved over the four years to interconnect with environmental and social/quality of life concerns. Jobs, businesses, and tax revenues are still driving forces in community decisions, but practitioners in these six community projects emphasize the importance of encouraging development which builds on the community’s assets -- its people, historic character, traditions, environmental resources and landscapes, and rural quality of life.

Examples:

“Creating economic opportunity” is the mission of the Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council (Interview on May 22, 1997). It used to be economic growth or economic development prior to the emphasis on sustainability during the past four years. According to Steve Knox, Vice President of MWVEC, economic opportunity means more than jobs; quality of life is important. “We don’t want any polluting jobs, for example” (Interview, May 22, 1997). They are proactive, seeking to base the economy on “the resources that are here. Let’s look at human and natural resources and put them together to create economic development from within rather than from outside. We also link to education and technology, asking questions such as what do kids need to be productive in their lives? What do adults need to upgrade their skills to keep control over their lives” (Interview on May 21, 1997 with Margaret Howlett, Executive Director).

Sustain Western Maine and its parent body, Western Mountains Alliance, has many entry points. Sustain Western Maine’s vision statement describes the characteristics “most cherished by people living [there] are the natural beauty of this area, the friendliness of the people, and the neighborly welcoming quality of our rural small town society.” Based on this view of community, the group’s projects have different starting points but integrate with other issues. For example, the Parish Nurses Program is “the kind of program that usually resides within the faith community (Interview on May 14, 1997). Instead it is cooperative venture among religious leaders, health care providers, and volunteers and is, thereby, able to address health care needs of the underserved population in ways which ministers or doctors/nurses alone could not accomplish. Two parish nurses, one of whom is also a family development specialist and board member of Sustain Western Maine, go into people’s homes without charge to help “with the little actions”. For example, they arrange for transportation so that neighbors can drive people for treatment; they take time listening to people’s problems; and they talk at churches about issues like stress reduction.

- ***Capacity Building is the Key for Delivering Results***

The most startling finding is that the approach of capacity building seems to be the most successful strategy for delivering community results. “Capacity building” includes developing trusted relationships, nurturing leaders and volunteers, and creating effective organizations. It turns out to be the essence of both process and products. As one practitioner commented, “You can’t have economic

development until you have community development. Community development means building trust”.<sup>6</sup>  
[Other points amplify this finding]

- ***Environment by Itself is Not the Chosen Entry Point***

Environment, as a single point of entry, is not popular in these communities based on the particular people and organizations involved in these projects. Environmental results come from projects which link natural resource protection and management to other concerns, such as health care, education, economic development, transportation, and rural character and heritage.

Examples:

The Northeast Stewardship Project out of Concord, Vermont is trying to shift the philosophy and practices of forestry management from heavy cutting to sustainable forestry. “The entry point isn’t environment.” It is a health care issue -- for example, the effects of forestry herbicides. It is an economic issue -- for example, helping loggers and foresters get jobs and improve their skills. It is community pride -- being proud of living in the Northeast Kingdom (Telephone interviews with board members on May 4, June 18, and June 20, 1997).

The Cobscook Bay project is difficult to characterize since its major environmental effort (The Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project) began under the aegis of the Ford Foundation funded sustainable community project but is now a self-standing, independent project and none of its funds have come from the Ford Foundation grant. The clam project focuses on viewing Cobscook Bay as a “unique ecosystem” (Telephone interviews on June 4 and 12, 1997). Rather than emphasizing the environment directly, this project connects to people’s lives through education (e.g., student computer modeling and monitoring), economic development (e.g., open up previously closed clam flats for commercial fishing), and quality of life (e.g., able to restore the region’s cultural and historical heritage; enable people to live in a poor, isolated region). (Interviews with community practitioners involved in the Clam Restoration Project as well as people involved in other Cobscook Bay activities, June 4, June 12, June 17, 1997)

- ***Environmental Contributions Come Primarily from Individuals.***

The 1996 assessment concluded that environmental values and practices come from some individual participants’ beliefs and contributions rather than from their environmental organizations’ image, identity, and actions. This finding is still valid. The one exception is the Maine Nature Conservancy whose involvement in Cobscook Bay preceded the sustainable community project and whose philosophy and community-based strategy dovetails with the principles and practices of the Cobscook Bay project.

Examples:

Some people from traditional environmental organizations projects (e.g., Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, New Hampshire Audubon Society, Appalachian Mountain

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<sup>6</sup> Warren Cook, Western Mountains Alliance (Telephone interview on June 24, 1997).

Club, Vermont Natural Resources Council, and the Vermont Land Trust) and state environmental agencies (e.g., NH Fish and Game, Vermont Fish and Wildlife) participated in the projects not as representatives of their organizations, but as individuals. In the two New Hampshire projects, staff from the Audubon Society and SPNHF were able to attend meetings once their time was compensated with small grants. These environmental organizations and the state environmental agencies did not embrace the sustainable community projects as fitting into their own agendas.

The exception is the Maine Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. Jim Dow, the staff person actively involved in the Cobscook Bay project describes the congruence of interest as: "It seemed like a natural train to jump on...It was like catching a good wave" (Telephone interview on June 4, 1997). Prior to the start-up of the Cobscook Bay project, TNC had targeted this region because of its ecological value and was thinking of creating an ecosystem-oriented project there. TNC is interested in conservation and realizes that "a sustainable, healthy, functioning ecosystem needs a reasonable economy or else people will threaten that system" (June 4, 1997). So, there was a natural fit. TNC provided \$5,000 to pay for Will Hopkins' time while he wrote proposals for the clam restoration project. They are the legal institutional "home" for that project. With his organization's backing, Jim Dow has played "a huge role" by attending most meetings, being on the Sustainable Cobscook Community Alliance Steering Committee, and helping on the clam project (Interview with Will Hopkins on October 22, 1995).

- ***Measuring Results Needs to Relate to a Community's Circumstances***

Communities act like collective individuals. They have personalities and moods.

The challenges of making changes in a community are significant and, in some of the historically more isolated and independent-minded rural places, almost overwhelming. Progress needs to be evaluated by quantifying tangible community improvements as well as by measuring qualitative changes in a community's attitude. The most significant progress in some of the most change-adverse communities is a sense of hope, a belief that people can make a difference, and the creation of a new organization.

Examples:

Hardwick, Vermont was described in a newspaper article as "the armpit of Vermont" (Undated article by Cassandra Hemenway in the "Seven Days" newspaper published in Burlington, Vermont). Main Street hit a low point in the winter of 1992 when three buildings in the center of town burned to the ground. Six years later there are still some empty store fronts and new megastores within an hour's distance threaten the economic viability of the downtown shops. However, people feel more upbeat. Jane Johns who runs a florist store commented that "the good part is that we work together" (Telephone interview on June 19, 1997). The merger of the Hardwick Business Community as a program within the Hardwick Area Chamber of Commerce and the recent hiring of Marilyn Rogerson, a 30 year resident as the part-time staff person, are starting to pay off. Marilyn's membership drive has already produced more than 60, with 6 new members coming from surrounding towns. These fees are sufficient to cover her salary (Telephone interview on June 19, 1997).

Cobscook Bay is another example of a poor, isolated place. An article in the *Bangor Daily News* in 1995 described Lubec as: “Statistically, Lubec’s a mess. Household income - about \$14,000 - is half of the state mean. Annual unemployment swings between 16 and 17 percent, almost always at least twice the state average...Tax delinquencies and liens take up six pages of the town report. One-fifth of the homeowners can’t pay their sewer bills or won’t hook up to the new system. Only two remnants of the town’s sardine empire survive...” (September 16-17, 1995, p. 1). Three years later, there is “a vibrancy which wasn’t there before. The entire attitude of the community is changing”, according to Lubec’s economic department director. People attend meetings in other towns, a rarity in the past. People are willing “to be involved as long as there is a chance of it working” (Telephone interview on June 19, 1997). Tangible evidence of results spurs on even a greater sense of hope. The old American Cannery eye-sore along Lubec’s waterfront has been taken down and a new marina project has been funded entirely without any debt to the town. Operation and maintenance costs are covered by fees which are higher for “aways” and affordable for local fishermen (Interview on June 19, 1997).

## **CIVIC CAPACITY**

- ***Community Building Produces Lasting and Extensive Community Improvements***

Building civic capacity in a community -- by encouraging and training leaders, involving volunteers, creating and using networks, developing and relying on partnerships for projects -- is THE key ingredient for improving the lives of people and the environment. Practitioners who leapt into projects before they developed trusted relationships, credibility, and legitimacy within their communities discovered that their efforts were often short-lived, frustrating, and unrewarded. Those that invested in building personal connections were able to convert that capacity into significant, tangible results which last and multiply over time.

Examples:

STA-NORTH learned this lesson the hard way. The dedicated small group of volunteers determined a need for a milk bottling plant to support the local dairy farmers. When this project proved to be not cost-effective, the group went ahead to study the feasibility of a water bottling plant. Although this kind of facility may someday prove feasible and desirable, it is not at this time. The few volunteers invested months of time and \$6,000 in foundation dollars towards this project, but it never caught on in the community. “When STA-NORTH was investigating the bottling plant, it was just me...nobody else helped except for Nancy Gray, who wasn’t even a STA-NORTH member” (Interview with a board member on May 18, 1997). The results of another project were the same. The same few board members decided to create a Crafters Market and did all the work of finding a site, buying tents, establishing procedures, seeking vendors, setting up during the Sunday dates during the summer of 1996 and then “realized that all the materials we put together doesn’t mount to a hill of beans because no one wanted to follow the rules” (Telephone interview with a board member on May 8, 1997). This summer the market was every other Sunday, with a high of 40 vendors the first Sunday and less than 10 by the end of August. Next year the site will no longer be available and one of the key participants (Bob Carney) will have moved out-of-town Interviews on May 18, 1997).

The Western Mountains Alliance and its Sustain Western Maine project is an example of a sophisticated community-building effort. The nature of many of their projects began with a singular agenda aimed at a specific outcome and evolved into a multi-purpose, multi-audience agenda aimed more at enabling people to learn for themselves. Dave Olson, chair of the Infrastructure Committee of SWM, described how he “moved from hardware to community building” in evolving a project initially focused on getting computers to be used to one aimed at being a community “electronic bulletin board”. He reached outside his committee to find several people eager to set up a non-profit organization and link the Internet, cable t.v. and fax capability together for community information and exchange. A woman, for example, uses the group’s technology to disseminate minutes for the peer lending meeting. Unemployed people find job listings simultaneously on the cable station and on the Internet site. (Interview on May 13, 1997).

Another example from WMA/SWM is the Western Mountains Community Market which opened on May 24, 1997 in Farmington. The idea for the market came from a group organized for a different purpose. Originally some SWM board members wanted to acquire property from the Water District for an organic farm, farmer’s market, and open space. Key leaders for this project Scott Planting (board member of both organizations, minister, highly respected), Bruce Hazard (board member of SWM, interested in regional cultural heritage), and Gil Riley (retired engineer, board member of SWM) sent out mailings, organized meetings, and helped the group develop a vision concept. While negotiations were underway the group built “capacity” (Interviews with participants on May 12, 1997). They got excited about doing something to improve the local economy. When the price for acquisition proved too high, the group chose not to disband but to re-orient the project. Their longer term objective remains to develop a farm, but in the interim the momentum is being focused on an idea first mentioned in an article in SWM’s newsletter, *The Advocate*. The concept’s currency was reinforced by Ron Nissen, an entrepreneur and consultant who gave a talk at the April, 1995 Northern New England Sustainable Communities Workshop. A local artisan’s interest was peaked because a market has economic benefits to vendors. Although busy, Mark Prentiss joined the group. His “old boy network” brought additional credibility and contacts. Twenty vendors are needed to pay for expenses. As of May 12, 37 vendors were committed (Interviews with participants on May 12, 1997).

- ***Volunteers have a Tolerance Limit***

Volunteers seem to have their “personal thresholds” after which their contributions either wane or are directly fed into improving their professional lives. The people who remained actively involved over many years are those who used their knowledge, skills, training, contacts, and other experiences in this project to create new careers, find funding for their own projects, or gain personal satisfaction if financial support is not a paramount concern (i.e., they are retired or employed in a related field).

Examples:

The three key volunteers who established an Electronic Grange Network as part of the Sustain Western Maine Project started out as a musician/multi-media electronics technician, director of an university library with a background in the use of technology applied to information management, and an adult education teacher. Four years later all three changed jobs. Two established “Maine West” which

provides “a broad range of services for businesses, organizations, and professionals in western Maine” including computer systems and networking, web site hosting on their Internet domain (mainewest.com), web site design, marketing, and maintenance, multimedia presentations, graphic design, and custom software application programs for small businesses (brochure). The third is developing a multi-purpose communications center for hosting conferences, workshops, training sessions, and other forums where people need access to his technology for communicating with and educating their audiences. Their lives are different because they participated in the Infrastructure Committee. “This project is a watershed for it. It has changed my life”, said one of the three volunteers (Interview on May 13, 1997).

Linda Fox, the first part-time staff person in the Hardwick, Vermont Project learned a lot about the nature of doing business in this community by working on Hardwick Business Community projects like the Business Walk Arouns, Joint Marketing, Holiday Creating Marketing, and Shop Local campaign, that she started a non-profit gathering place (Renaissance Cafe) to entice more people to come to the downtown. Then, she parlayed this experience into her own gourmet deli business which she runs from a store on Main Street (1996 Evaluation; Telephone interview on September 7, 1997).

In instances where volunteers could not dovetail with or convert their contributions to their professional lives, they eventually felt burned out and/or had to turn their attentions elsewhere. One person from the Cobscook Bay Project said that she and some others “weren’t getting paid” like Dianne Tilton and Will Hopkins ... “we were volunteers” to explain why their level of involvement waned over time (Telephone interview on June 17, 1997).

- ***Perceived Lack of Clarity May Stem from Many Reasons***

Many practitioners expressed confusion about the rules, procedures, process, relationships, and even the point of the project. This circumstance can be due to a number of reasons including intentional lack of clarity by the community foundation staff because they wanted community practitioners to take responsibility for creating their own projects, procedures, and indicators; unfamiliarity and some discomfort with the nature of this kind of project; varying degrees of difficulty knowing what to do with the power of such responsibility; the fact that this project is but one aspect and influence in community practitioners’ lives; and inadequacies with project definition and management (described in a latter section on the Role of Foundations)

Examples:

“The nature of the relationship with the Maine Community Foundation was too nebulous and the messages were mixed. For example, we were told that “It is your project; do with it as you want. Then, we discovered that it was really the foundation’s money. Who is really in control here? Upfront there wasn’t a clear understanding”. This comment came from a practitioner in the Cobscook Bay Project but could have been said by others, especially from communities which were the least organized at the start-up phase (Telephone interview on June 4, 1997).

“No one told me what I am supposed to be doing” was the cry of an overburdened community leader frustrated about the lack of direction and support within the STA-NORTH community region in New Hampshire (Telephone interview on May 8, 1997).

“People don’t know how to be board members” is a common complaint. In some instances, like in the Northeast Stewardship Project, the community foundation staff person understood this need and provided hands-on leadership training advice. “Eddie has been more than a friendly schemer; he has also been our safety net” (Telephone interview on June 20, 1997). In other cases like in Cobscook Bay the emerging leaders were supported, financially and technically, to learn skills but the other volunteers were left without any such support.

- ***The Concept of Sustainability is Better Understood***

After four years, more people, especially practitioners directly involved in the sustainable community projects, understand the meaning of “sustainability”. Although there is still a lot of confusion about its vagueness and practical applicability, people refer in conversations, news articles, and in written documents to concepts such as healthy community, ecosystem management, regional development, and long-term investments. Historical, geographical, and communication barriers have been broken down, as indicated by the number of people who attend meetings in other communities and the number of projects which involve joint actions from historic competitors. Practicing “sustainability” has improved communications, led to a more cooperative spirit, and developed a greater sense of shared problems and responsibilities.

Examples:

“In rural areas, there are individuals and families who live sustainably, but community sustainability is more difficult to understand and practice”, commented a practitioner in the Western Mountains Alliance/Sustain Western Maine Project. People gave examples to illustrate how they believe the concept of community sustainability has been evidenced in western Maine over the past four years - - “People are no longer satisfied to live passively ... People are less territorial and have forays into other sectors ... Resources have become more visible to people and they understand better their assets, such as the youth leaders and the eco-cultural tourism...Connections which are not so obvious have been revealed and made... The Family Development Project has changed the nature of the way Western Maine Community Action does its work. I realize that our programs need to be family rather than individual based and we need to engage the community much more ... We are getting different perspectives brought to the table because of our collaborative approach ... Key lesson is that community building process has to happen. Our experience validates what Robert Putnam says -- Before you can have economic development, you need community development. For example, our Franklin County network model proves that to deal effectively with out-patients’ concerns you have to build a trust and relationships with all providers and customers ... Some people changed during this project. They came to understand the complexities of capacity-building and the long-term nature of this kind of project... People have learned about accountability -- to follow-through and take responsibility ... There are a lot of good partnerships now, like with the university which is still an underutilized resource ...” (Telephone and personal interviews on May 12, May 13, May 14, June 24, 1997)

Comments from the Cobscook Bay Project offer other illustrations of how people may not use the term “sustainability” but have become comfortable with its meaning -- “There has been an

incremental sense of tying environment and economic development ... There is a change in the entire attitude of the community of Lubec, a vibrancy now which wasn't there before ... Before the Bay didn't figure into the estimation of people, especially kids. Now, kids see the Bay area as part of their future ... There is a sense of pride in the Bay in all the towns, not just in Lubec and Eastport ... There is more awareness about problems, such as pesticides and clear-cutting because of the education and clam project ... We realize that all of our resources are inter-connected ... Someone used the word "sustainable" harvest at one of our economic development public forums ... Clearly there is a much stronger identity of a Cobscook Bay ecosystem ... There is increasing recognition that Cobscook Bay is an unique ecosystem, not just an ecological address ... People are learning that before communities can work together they need to work better within their own community ... I've personally learned to be more tolerant ... I can't make myself do economic development the traditional way anymore. If my board insisted on going back to that approach, I couldn't work here ... Local is informal not formal. It is one-to-one. It is word of mouth. It is experiential as opposed to educated or trained. It is based on oral traditions. It is based on kinships or relationships..." (Telephone interviews on May 7, May 29, June 4, June 12, June 17, 1997)

- ***The Spark of Sustainability Will Continue After the End of the Ford Foundation Grant***

The January, 1996 assessment concluded that the community practitioners never depended entirely on the Ford Foundation funds. Rather, they leveraged the moneys and have been slow to spend them. Creating and maintaining a "spark" depends more on community capacity than on dollars.

The "spark" of the sustainability project is embedded somewhere in all six communities so that continuity will prevail after the end of the Ford Foundation funding. Some organizations, such as Sustain Western Maine/Western Mountains Alliance, the Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council, the Hardwick Area Chamber of Commerce are stronger now than they were four years ago and are more aligned according to sustainability principles and practices. Others such as the various Cobscook Bay projects will continue as independent projects rather than as organizations. The Northeast Stewardship Project is an incorporated non-profit organization, but it may change as its major focus (i.e., creating a regional natural resources center) unfolds. STA-NORTH in New Hampshire is the most fragile entity at the moment and its future is uncertain.

Examples:

The informal Hardwick Business Community has merged with the Hardwick Area Chamber of Commerce. "This is a wise strategy because it will allow an expansion beyond downtown Hardwick" (Telephone interview on May 10, 1997). "It is important now to become an entity. We need some rules and members" (Telephone interview on June 19, 1997). "This move is already working. Marilyn Rogerson [part-time staff person] has already gotten more than 60 new memberships". By generating memberships based on supporting the activities of the former Hardwick Business Community, the Chamber is strengthened and the staff person's expenses are covered. No longer are foundation funds necessary. In addition, the practitioners from the HBA bring a non-traditional view of economic development to the Chamber. They are experienced with community marketing, peer lending, and business-to-business relationships.

The distinction between Western Mountains Alliance and Sustain Western Maine is now “crystal clear” (Interview on May 12, 1997). After four years, SWM has its own identity, though many of the board members are also involved in WMA.

STA-NORTH is the most fragile of the six community entities. Its board members feel burned out and unsupported. Its treasurer is moving out-of-town. Its recent past president resigned as of June, 1997 and is “taking a step back” saying that “I feel like I’m talking a different language” (Telephone interview on May 8, 1997). The current president wants to expand her home business and devote less time to this project. The group, as a whole, tried valiantly to stir up community interest through its activities, but did not connect to local people. A recent survey, paid for from the foundation funds, indicated that most people did not know about STA-NORTH. Some people felt that it was a small “clique” of outsiders -- the few active practitioners were born outside of the three town region. “I was called a flatlander even though I’ve lived here 30 years” (Interview on May 18, 1997). Some respondents replied that no one had asked them for their ideas. Board members respond that people in this region have a “failure mindset” having been accustomed to depend on others (like the mill) rather than to take responsibility and initiative. (Interviews on May 18, 1997). It is unclear who will step in and assume leadership. One possibility is Lisa Maxwell who was recently hired with state funds to staff the Coos County Economic Development Corporation. STA-NORTH is providing their office space for her and her project. [Update since interviews were conducted in May: several new participants have joined with several long-time community practitioners and are trying to invest personal energy into this project]

Cobscook Bay is an intriguing example of how the project has become decentralized, rooted in several places. Will Hopkins and his Cobscook Clam Restoration Project is flourishing with volunteers, financial backing, and tangible results. His next step is to evolve the project into a regional center. Dianne Tilton, through the Sunrise County Economic Council, is also a spark for sustainable development throughout Washington County. Various local/regional initiatives are taking off having been started or influenced by the now defunct Sustainable Cobscook Community Alliance, e.g., the ferry project, McCurdy’s Smokehouse project, and the Cobscook Maritime Institute. Several practitioners commented that even though they might have done a better job in creating a regional organization, this region may be more suited to a proliferation of groups working on specific projects. Will Hopkins was quoted in the *Quoddy Times* (November 22, 1996): “It is not the traditional set up [network]. It has been a fairly diffused way of working, but it has allowed the involvement of many people.”

- ***Having Part-time Staff is an Essential Building Block for Continuing the Sustainable Community Projects***

There remains a critical need for staff operating funds. Project support is not a substitute for on-going staffing of an organization which is responsible for many projects. The Ford Foundation grants provided the opportunity to allocate funds for part-time staff. Part of the transition strategy being developed this year by the participating community foundations is to determine whether or not they want to play this role or else help find alternative funding mechanisms.

Examples:

Finding and having the “right kind” of staff person has been challenging, yet is an essential ingredient in all the communities’ progress. Concord, Vermont floundered for months before deciding that an all volunteer board of busy people could not do the work (Telephone interviews on June 20, June 24, 1997). In hiring a part-time staff person, the board failed at first. They selected a person from Burlington, Vermont who commuted to south Essex County and had grown up in New York City. This person lasted less than a year and was replaced by Jim Wood, an active board member, local forester, and born and well-known in the community. He has transitioned from being leader of the board to an effective staff person (Telephone interview on June 20, 1997). He feels that he is perceived now as a professional, saying that people call him “Jim” instead of “Jimmy” (Telephone interview on May 4, 1997). “Jim Wood has been growing personally and gaining respect as an organizer. People look at the Northeast Stewardship Project as a budding resource” (Telephone interview on June 17, 1997). As one board member disclosed, “Jim is now doing all the on-the-ground connections, having reached the point of getting the board organized (Telephone interview on June 20, 1997). He runs the meetings, makes the contacts, speaks on behalf of the Northeast Stewardship Project, sets up workshops, and is gathering support for establishing a regional natural resource center (Telephone interviews on May 4, June 20, and June 24, 1997).

Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council began in 1997 to shift from an all volunteer board to one with a paid executive director. As one board officer stated the situation: “There are limitations when dealing with an all volunteer group. Time commitment is not enough and the work falls on five active board members.” (Interview on May 22, 1997). A three year capacity grant provides funding for Margaret Howlett; the Board of Directors is already working with her to find replacement funds (Board Meeting on May 21, 1997). In interviewing candidates, the selection committee emphasized “sustainability” as well as technical expertise and experience (Interviews on May 21, 1997).

Debbie Burd, the staff person who works part-time for the Western Mountains Alliance and part-time for Sustain Western Maine, is “pivotal” because she “picks up the slack, sets the stage, knows whom to contact” (Interview with board member on May 13, 1997). Sometimes her behind-the-scenes, community organizer style is not appreciated because she “doesn’t often use the ‘I’ word, instead saying ‘we’”. She makes things happen but others may not be aware of her role and contributions (Interviews on May 12, May 13, 1997). The Maine Community Foundation is committed to ensuring that this position is funded after Ford Foundation funds are spent.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- ***Economic Climate and Conditions Influence Attitudes about Change***

Economic conditions (i.e., extent of poverty, unemployment levels, capital availability) play a role in everyone’s life, but tend not to be so critical in promoting or undermining sustainability. However, a distinction can be made between communities where economic conditions are often fluid, changing, and dependent on outside expertise and inflow of newcomers, and those whose economic development accrues to long-time residents who work for a few employers or for themselves in economic activities which have been around for some time. The latter communities are more resistant to change, innovation, expertise of outsiders, and to the use of technologies such as the Internet.

Examples:

STA-NORTH, Northeast Stewardship, and Cobscook Bay Projects are located in relatively poor regions where outsiders are unwelcome, new ideas questioned, and hostilities abound. On the other hand, Mt. Washington Valley and Western Mountains Alliance/Sustain Western Maine are regions where pockets of poverty exist but people are used to an influx of newcomers and the region has a diversified economic base (Interview on May 21, 1997).

In trying to explain the openness of the greater Farmington, Maine region, one person thought that “resource-based economies, like Cobscook Bay, are ‘territorial’ and may harbor resentments.” Whereas, his region’s “economics aren’t so defined geographically” (Interview on May 13, 1997). Mt. Washington Valley region of New Hampshire accepted Margaret Howlett “as an outsider perhaps because so many people here came from elsewhere” (Interview on May 21, 1997).

In STA-NORTH, “some of the old-timers are set in their ways” (Interview on May 18, 1997). The three towns which comprise STA-NORTH (Groveton, Stark, and Stratford) “have never taken responsibility because of their dependence on the mill”. Townspeople rely on being taken care of rather than on taking control themselves (Interviews on May 18 and 19, 1997).

In the Northeast Stewardship and Cobscook Bay Projects, people are afraid to reveal ideas for fear that they will be stolen. “There is not much trust in the region” (Telephone interview on June 20, 1997). For good reason. As one member of the Northeast Stewardship Project explained, another organization “grabbed our idea for a natural resource center and began to promote it in the media as their own. Jim Wood went to them and said it is our idea but let’s work together” (Telephone interview on June 20, 1997). An old-timer in Cobscook Bay openly admitted that “Around here, keep ideas to yourself. You don’t want someone to take your idea and run with it. Someone might take your job if you let them know about it” (Telephone interview on June 17, 1997).

- ***Creating Local Wealth Comes From Using Traditional and Non-Traditional Economic Techniques***

Building local wealth based on community assets is a common and effective strategy in these rural Northern New England communities. Techniques include both traditional economic tools such as investments in infrastructure (e.g., piers, streetscapes, housing rehabilitation) as well as non-traditional ones such as local currencies, peer-lending programs, and bartered exchanges. Key ingredients to attract local and tourist dollars are developing a community identity or “niche” (e.g., Cobscook Bay region, Mt. Washington Valley region, Western Mountains region); creating destination points; designing and implementing a marketing campaign (e.g., business directories, joint advertising, sponsoring celebratory events); and establishing partnerships (e.g., business helping business). The goal is not simply to buy, but to buy local products and services.

Examples:

Cobscook Bay has used both traditional and non-traditional economic techniques. Infrastructure improvements include a new marina in Lubec, a revitalized port in Eastport, and plans for a ferry system across the bay. Public dollars have been invested, such as \$200,000 worth of housing renovations in Lubec. Private development includes new restaurants, a sea cucumber industry, and a new bank. Foundation grants are supporting the revitalization of the clam industry and a tourist attraction (McCurdy's Smokehouse/Quoddy Maritime Museum). In addition, a Maine Community Development Block Grant of \$150,000 is financing a Cobscook Microloan Program for small businesses. Sunrise County Economic Council and the Economic Committee of the Cobscook Project are helping create farmers' markets, community supported agriculture at Yellow Birch Farm, and a maritime-based flexible network patterned after ACENet, a model presented at a conference attended by Dianne Tilton. Grant funds were received to help train fishermen in Washington County to work in the cranberry business. (Telephone interviews on May 7, June 12, June 16, June 17, 1997).

STA-NORTH and the Western Mountains Alliance/Sustain Western Maine organized local markets to publicize and sell local products. The STA-NORTH group bought tents, found vendors, and ran the summertime craft market in 1996 and the crafters and flea market in 1997. The Western Mountains Community Market opened in May, 1997. The idea for both projects can be traced to the April, 1995 six community workshop hosted by the Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire Community Foundations. Ron Nissen, the speaker, was later called upon in each of these regions to provide advice and background materials (Interviews on May 18, May 21, May 22, 1997).

Micro or peer lending programs have been instituted in Cobscook Bay, Mt. Washington Valley, Hardwick, and western Maine. Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council received approval from the Selectmen of Conway to administer the revolving loan program, funded by the NH Office of State Planning. In proving its eligibility, MWVEC was required to generate \$500,000 in additional local dollars for revolving loan projects. Three local banks each provided a letter of intent for \$1 million. Criteria for distributing the loan moneys includes sustainability principles, such as compatibility of proposed businesses with the overall MWV environment and quality of life. In May, 1997 the first two repayments to MWVEC came in from Green Mountain Rifle Barrel (Interviews on May 21, 22, 1997 and the Draft Administrative Plan and Credit Policy).

- ***Economic Well-Being Means More Than Jobs***

Economic improvements can sometimes come from focusing on non-economic concerns, such as education, health care, or quality of life. A good economy means more than jobs -- it means having health care benefits, access to adequate housing, a sense of satisfaction and enjoyment with life, and time to be with family and friends.

Examples:

The Renaissance Cafe, a non-profit worker cooperative, was started in Hardwick, Vermont in April of 1993 to "be a community center" (Local news article, undated). The cafe's hand-out describes the group's goal is "to provide a friendly gathering place for local residents and for people visiting the area. We offer Green Mountain Coffee Roasters coffees, espresso, cappuccino, teas, juices, and homemade baked goods. We also offer music, poetry, art gallery, educational experiences, sharing

times, and great conversation. The cafe is a place to: sit and read, come in with friends, have a meeting, make new friends, hangout while your laundry is getting done, take a break, find a friendly face, have a good conversation, and slow down to enjoy life more. The Renaissance Cafe is an experience in community-building. We are trying to learn how to work together, make decisions together, enhance the surrounding communities and towns, and get along with lots of different people” (Renaissance Cafe, Centennial House, Main Street, undated brochure). This cafe served these functions for several years and is now a space for sitting and for community events (Telephone interview on June 17, 1997).

Western Mountains Alliance’s Welfare-to-Work Program has a goal of finding jobs for 484 AFDC people within the next five years. The approach is unlike past job or social service programs. Instead of focusing on individuals, they are concerned with whole families. Rather than train people and then search for jobs, there is a comprehensive, step-by-step, coordinated effort. A highly respected businessperson and WMA/SWM board member brings in his colleagues and asks them what jobs they need to fill. The Department of Human Services coordinates pre-employment training services. Social service agencies like Western Maine Community Action provide training sessions. A safety-net group led by a local minister and WMA/SWM board member coordinates emergency responses to handle problems such as sudden car troubles or loss of child care. This approach has already, in its planning phase, led to the reorganization of Western Maine Community Action because the director now believes that the organization needs to have “more engagement with the community” (Interviews on May 14, 1997).

## **POLITICAL INFLUENCES**

In the January, 1996 assessment a conclusion was that building sustainable communities is not easy. “It takes time, patience, effective leadership, engagement of people who have differing viewpoints, and listening and responding to the different voices in the community. It also means change -- pushing for new ideas and mechanisms, encouraging new leaders, and often dealing with threatened and hostile people who resist that change.”<sup>7</sup>

- ***Some Political Changes Are Evident***

The four years of gradual community building have produced some substantive political changes -- in policies, regulations, programs, political leadership, and in political climate. Not surprising, the communities with the most sophisticated leaders, organizations, and networks have produced the most tangible political results and the ones which are in earlier phases of community building can demonstrate, at best, improved climates for change and a growing sense of hope -- forerunners for community results. Examples:

“In Concord, Vermont you don’t see the change” (Telephone interview on June 17, 1997). Yet, “there is a sea change in attitude” which is evidenced in the support for the budget, in the town making capital improvements, and in the support for the high school’s Natural Resources Program (Telephone interview on June 17, 1997). “We’ve established a presence...folks are beginning to realize

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<sup>7</sup>. “Northern New England Sustainable Communities Implementation Project: An Evaluation”, p. 10.

who we are...You can't drive down Concord and see a difference, but in the larger community sense we have built our own community" (Telephone interview on June 30, 1997).

Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council has evolved into a politically influential body. "On Monday Tom Deans got a call from the governor's office asking for information on sustainable development. He sent her a memo and a copy of the 1966 Evaluation report (Interview on May 21, 1997). MWVEC got the largest transportation grant in the state for its pathway paralleling Route 16 (1996 Evaluation). With support from the New Hampshire Office of State Planning, the Conway Board of Selectmen voted to turn over its revolving loan program to MWVEC, thereby providing potentially more than a million dollars for projects based, in part, of sustainability principles (1996 Evaluation).

- ***Political Change Begins With Change in Mindsets***

Strategies to educate elected and appointed politicians include hosting breakfast discussions, organizing luncheon events, participating on government committees and task forces, getting on the agendas of local officials' regular meetings, performing tasks requested by government officials, and educating the electorate to influence politicians.

Examples:

- Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council's Board of Directors is comprised primarily of representatives from the 12 towns. President Dave Sorensen and Vice President Steve Knox make personal visits to town officials, sometimes bringing them technical information such as land use maps. When the new executive director was hired, she introduced herself to each board of selectmen and was feted at an open house on May 29, 1997 at the MWVEC office in Conway. Special appeals to business people are made through luncheon discussions (e.g., a technology seminar on May 21, 1997; high-powered conferences (e.g., the two day Rural Technology Summit on September 18 and 19, 1997 which features Governor Jeanne Shaheen); a business visitation program (which uses volunteers to help organizations learn more about the local economy, to find out their needs, and to maintain communications); "Eggs and Issues" ( breakfast networking sessions on specific topics); Roundtable Community Dialogues; series of workshops aimed at small business people; and projects such as the revolving loan program. Their success is indicated by the Governor choosing to address MWVEC's annual meeting as one of her first public acts (Interviews on May 21 and 22, 1997).

Western Mountains Alliance/Sustain Western Maine can call legislators from both political parties and get them to any meeting (Interview on May 12, 1997). This ability demonstrates the stature and clout which this group has gained over the years through having a well-connected and respected Board of Directors, creating a Western Maine Caucus in 1995 to educate and communicate with state legislators; hosting breakfasts for legislators on hot topics (usually more than 20 attend); serving on appointed boards, committees, and task forces (e.g., Debbie Burd serves on the Board of the Natural Resources Council of Maine, participates on International Paper Company's Environmental Pollution Board, serves on the Consumer Education Board to the Public Utilities Commission and is on the steering committee of Maine USDA's Rural Development strategically planning project); responding to administration requests (e.g., organize a regional conference for small businesses in 1997 and asked again for 1998; co-sponsor the governor's Blaine House Conference); and by participating in a wide

variety of collaborations, partnerships, and coalitions dealing with economic development, environment, health care, cultural and historical heritage, and communications (Interview on May 12, 1997).

- ***Political Change Needs to be Institutionalized***

Sustainable community results are predicated on education, community and individual capacity building, and attitudinal shifts. Yet, to be both adequate and long-lasting, they need to be “locked” into enforceable mechanisms, such as laws, regulations, institutional policies and programs, and financing incentives/disincentives.

Examples:

State of Maine environmental regulators delegated authority to the Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project to train volunteers to conduct water quality sampling, surveys of septic systems, and monitoring of red tides. Volunteers reduced the time to sample and re-open flats from five to two years (Telephone interview on June 12, 1997).

The Ferry District Law was signed on June 12, 1997 with hopes of building a ferry system between Lubec and Eastport (Telephone interview on June 19, 1997)

The Beals Island Hatchery left the aegis of the University of Maine at Machias in 1993 to become an independent non-profit organization and expanded its scope beyond production of seed clams to include community out-reach (Telephone interview on June 12, 1997).

July 1, 1997 a forest practices law was signed in Vermont which requires an accepted forest management plan for cutting 40 or more acres. The Northeast Stewardship Project was active in conducting workshops and supporting the bill. Jim Wood, staff person and forester, has been hired by the person in the past most responsible for clear cutting (Telephone interview on May 19, 1997).

- ***Building Sustainable Community Takes a Long Time***

Despite many examples of political changes in these six communities, the vast majority of people still think traditionally and resist new ideas. Change comes slowly, gradually, and through persistence.

Examples:

“It feels as if the seeds are germinating” in the Hardwick, Vermont project. It took years of “plugging away” and there are still pockets of “resistance and negativity”. The new town manager is a local person who “knows how to build a solid community”. Hopefully, “he’ll provide stability” and support. “There are a couple of new people on the Select Board, but new blood is still needed” (Telephone interview on September 7, 1997).

Why hasn’t STA-NORTH, NH group been more successful? “People in this region don’t take risks. People have a mindset that says failure. Some people perceive that the group is a clique” (Interview on May 18, 1997). The three towns (Groveton, Stark, and Stratford) “have never taken responsibility because of people’s dependence on the mill. They need capacity-building” to help them

learn how to take responsibility and act for themselves (Interview on May 18, 1997). The group has, nevertheless, produced some tangible results -- their business directory has been expanded and was used as a model for the Cobscook Bay project; a brochure on cottage industries is now available; and the governor has financed a staff person for Coos County who will use STA-NORTH's office (Interviews on May 18, 1997 and telephone interview on August 14, 1997).

Change also comes in incremental steps which are moving along sustainability pathways. Mission statements, indicators, and evaluations are useful tools to ensure that each action taken progresses in desired directions and uses appropriate techniques. They open up the community building process as well as help people be accountable for their actions.

Examples:

“We [Northeast Stewardship Project] now have credibility with the community itself, rather than through local politicians” (Telephone interview on June 24, 1997). “Loggers are beginning to see the Northeast Stewardship Project as an opportunity to make their lives easier” (Telephone interview on May 4, 1997). These sentiments reflect a slow change in image and credibility built up after several years of meetings, drafting a mission statement, developing a work plan, and finding the “right kind” of staff person who “has pulled together enough good people and done good out-reach”. At last “we’ve established a presence...folks are beginning to realize who we are” (Telephone interviews on June 20, June 30, 1997). The group has been able to expand its scope beyond its initial focus of preserving the Natural Resources Program at Concord High School. “We needed a couple of years to get clarity of vision. Early on, our organization was driven by John and Barbara Irwin’s vision. It took a while to distill our vision into three or four areas which could be converted into projects” (Telephone interview on June 20, 1997).

Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council in New Hampshire and Western Mountains Alliance/Sustain Western Maine built upon an existing institution; worked many months to develop mission statements, committee structure, procedures, and projects; reached out throughout their regions to link with other organizations, to draw in volunteers, and to create credible images; and have made real differences in the lives of people. “I think that we [in MWVEC] are a far different organization now than five years ago. It has been a maturing process. We have a clearer sense of purpose and a sense of confidence that we can make changes. We always had energy, but now we know how to focus that energy positively” (Interview on May 22, 1997). “Sustain Western Maine is like a ripple effect” (Interview on My 12, 1997). “Our strategy locally is to build safety nets” (Interview on May 14, 1997).

## **ROLE OF THE FORD FOUNDATION AND THE THREE STATEWIDE COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS**

- ***The Prestige Factor***

Selection and funding by the perceived prestigious Ford Foundation made community practitioners feel pride and recognition. The Ford Foundation provided stature and legitimacy to the fledging community practitioners and their groups.

- ***The Personal Touch Makes the Difference***

From a results-oriented perspective, the most important indicator of foundation support is personal presence. Community foundation staff were valued most by the practitioners when they attended and participated in meetings and community events; when they responded to specific requests for information and technical advice; and when they provided psychological support and “hand-holding” during trying times. By partnering with the three community foundations whose staff had already developed some trust and credibility through personal relationships, the Ford Foundation gained access to personal presence. Results varied from community to community, with success tied directly to those community foundation staff who provided capacity building support rather than prescriptive answers, directives, or non-interaction.

- ***The Value of the Empowerment Hybrid Model***

Community practitioners were forced into taking responsibility because they had to decide their community’s mission, goals, projects, processes, and indicators. Some places, especially where there was a pre-existing organization such as the Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council in New Hampshire and the Western Mountains Alliance (the parent body for the Greater Farmington Sustain Western Maine Project), were ready to assume leadership and welcomed the additional resources and attention. Other communities, such as Hardwick and Concord/Northeast Stewardship Project in Vermont, floundered for a while but were mentored and nurtured by the Vermont Community Foundation staff person and were able to develop projects and organizations.

- ***Value of Setting the Course***

Each community foundation took responsibility for ensuring that their two community projects stayed focused on sustainability rather than traditional outlooks and for overseeing the budgets. The approaches used were different, but there was agreement among the three community foundations (through their participating staff) that the course was to better understand and apply the principles of sustainability at the community level. Without staff vigilance, prodding, advice, encouragement, and other techniques, community practitioners would probably not have invested the time, energy, and worthwhile frustrations wrestling with what “sustainability” means to them and how to interpret its meaning into actions.

- ***Project Limitations by Design***

The community foundations’ chosen strategy to provide very limited overall program direction, guidance, and oversight allowed each community foundation to use its preferred approach and each community to create its own mission, projects, and process. Its execution did not test the validity of its chosen “place-base” of Northern New England since each community experiment operated independently. The nature of each community being “rural” was a fact, but the project was not designed to test lessons learned in the six communities either against other rural communities elsewhere in the United States or with urban or suburban counterparts.

- ***Missed Opportunities***

By choosing not to devise a unified overall project, the community foundations ended up with results which document what happened but are difficult to evaluate. There are no reference points to judge whether or not tangible expected outcomes were achieved; to compare across communities; or to determine cumulative as well as holistic lessons for the Northern New England region. Assessments came from documenting and trying to understand the pieces in order to intuit the whole.

By choosing not to have a program coordinator and by having a loosely organized and barely staffed advisory committee, community foundation staff lost a potentially valuable forum for systematic cross-fertilization of ideas; analysis of strategies and results which could have led to project changes; establishing the basis for project evaluations/assessments, and for getting greater visibility, communication, and education to a growing audience of sustainable community practitioners, researchers, educators, foundation staff and board members/trustees, and consultants.

## Recommendations

### **FOLLOW-UP FOR THE SIX COMMUNITIES:**

The Ford Foundation and the three community foundations have an investment in the continued progress of the communities. During the transition period (before Ford Foundation funds end), the foundations need to:

- ***Determine their own roles and contributions at the end of this phase.***

Some entity needs to replace the Ford Foundation in providing operating support to pay for part-time community staff. Given the finding that such capacity is essential for sustainable community building and given the current difficulties and barriers in becoming self-sustaining for this financial aspect, such continued support is critical. If the community foundations do not choose to fill this role, then who will?

- ***Decide whether and how additional project support will be offered.***

Given the finding that community building takes years and given the investments and accomplishments to date in these six communities, the community foundations need to assist the community practitioners gain access to follow-up project funding by making some of their grants eligible for such purposes and by brokering opportunities between the community practitioners and other funders.

- ***Conduct Periodic Assessments***

The Ford Foundation has committed to support periodic evaluations/assessments to understand longer-term impacts. Such an assessment in five and ten years can help people document progress, discover more lessons from practical implementation experiences, and determine the usefulness of concepts such as the different phases of community building, the hybrid model of sustainable community

building, and the three approaches (i.e., capacity building, organizational building, and mentoring/nurturing).

## **TRANSFERABILITY TO OTHER COMMUNITIES:**

- ***Invest in an Educational Campaign***

Interest within the states of New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine for similar kinds of projects raises institutional and financial questions for the community foundations to consider and resolve, such as the number of such projects which a foundation can and should fund and the number and type of community foundation staff to implement more such projects. Community foundation staff need to educate their trustees, boards of directors, and committee members in order for them to appreciate the nature, value, and contributions of these projects and to help them see the links between sustainable community projects and the other agendas of their foundations.

Community foundation staff involved in the Northern New England Sustainable Communities Project will expand the number and likelihood of successful transfers by networking and partnering with other foundations. Opportunities need to be pursued to communicate results and collaborate on joint projects. In terms of communications, the Ford Foundation and the three community foundations might sponsor workshops at foundation meetings, host a wrap-up luncheon, organize a tour of the communities for potential “investors”, fund a project which enables community leaders to tell their stories at the request of the foundations, and include articles in their publications. In terms of project partnerships, the Ford Foundation project officer might help facilitate additional Ford Foundation collaborations with these community foundations on other thematic areas within the Ford Foundation.

- ***Consider Continuing the Partnership Among the Three Community Foundations***

The three community foundations need to decide if they want to maintain their partnership relationship for application to other kinds of projects. Given the synergy of personalities, the shared experiences with this project, and the common Northern New England region, it makes sense to consider a more structured and explicit partnership arrangement. If this pathway is chosen, then clarity of overall project purpose, goals, objectives, outcomes, and indicators needs to be defined at the outset of the next collaborative project. Moreover, a project leader needs to be chosen and an active advisory committee needs to be established to help guide the project, provide “inside” and “outside” perspectives, encourage cross-fertilization, and enhance communications.

## **ADDITIONAL RESEARCH:**

- ***Support research on phases of community building***

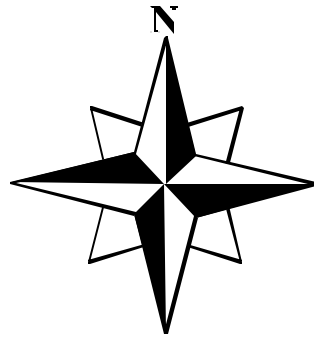
More applied research projects are needed to understand the nature and importance of the framework categorizing distinct phases of community building. Possible topics include: (1) test this framework on urban communities, communities outside of northern New England, and communities in countries other than United States to determine if these four phases are generally applicable and if other phases can be identified. (2) evaluate strategies and outcomes based on the phases of community

building to determine relevance and effectiveness. (3) indicator projects to match measurements with appropriate phases of community building.

- ***Support research on capacity building***

More applied research projects are needed to understand the nature of capacity building as a systemic approach for the design and implementation of sustainable community projects. Case studies are needed to identify the techniques, timing, and strategies used to achieve the most effective (and tangible) community improvements.

## COMMUNITY PROGRESS REPORTS



*Measuring progress towards building more sustainable communities is challenging. Each community is in a different “place” in terms of its environmental landscape, economic conditions, community resources, political mindset, and sense of identity. Therefore, it is essential to know “what” you want to measure before choosing “how” you measure results. It is almost impossible to separate out cause and effect -- so that progress is cumulative based on the influence of many sources.*

*The following community charts list the changes that have taken place -- organized by the topics chosen for this assessment -- in the six places involved in the Northern New England Sustainable Communities Project. These charts are intended to illustrate what and how these communities have changed over the four year project time period (mid-1993 until mid-1997). They are examples, intended to show how each of the six places evolved over time and to be used as illustrations for articles, speeches, and dialogues. The charts add to the base of knowledge provided in the January, 1996 case stories (part of the interim evaluation report available from the NH Charitable Foundation).*

# Cobscook Bay, Maine<sup>8</sup>

*Approximately 6,800 people live in this ecosystem community, with some towns as small as 355 people. Located in Washington County, the eastern most place in the United States, this region is comprised of nine municipalities (Eastport, Pleasant Point, Perry, Pembroke, Dennysville, Edmunds, Whiting, Trescott, and Lubec). and the Passamaquoddy Nation Reservation. Two miles of Cobscook Bay separate Eastport and Lubec. They have a long history of economic dependence on natural resources. Today, salmon aquaculture, fishing, and sea urchin harvesting are significant sources of income; the largest employers, however, are in public service fields and light manufacturing.*

## Community Results

TOPICS	MID 1993	MID 1997
Defining Sustainability	No understanding; depleted fishing industry; seasonal employment	Basic understanding of the concept of Cobscook Bay as a natural and human ecosystem
Sense of the Region	Individual municipalities; area called "Quoddy"	Realization that towns and city around the Bay are linked; refer to Cobscook Bay as the region (e.g., Cobscook Regional Clam Association)
Physical Infrastructure	Derelict buildings in Eastport; abandoned ice house and dilapidated pier in Lubec; no water transportation other than private boats	American Cannery building gone from Lubec waterfront.  Uneven results along Eastport's waterfront. Some buildings have been purchased and fixed up. The most visible block of buildings, however, contain boarded-up windows, and vacant office spaces.  <i>Quoddy Maritime Museum</i> has local crafters consignment shop. One building is being restored.

<sup>8</sup>. Although some of the projects are self-standing (such as the Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project), they are considered by many people in the region to be part of the community-building efforts launched by the same people at the same time as the Ford Foundation Sustainable Cobscook Bay Project. Therefore, no distinction is being made to separate contributions from projects related to, but funded, by other sources.

		<p>Ice house moved and site given to the NE Aquarium for holding tanks.</p> <p>New <i>marina</i> in Lubec.</p> <p>Revitalizing housing units in Lubec through low-interest, long-term grants and/or loans.</p> <p>Revitalizing Eastport's <i>port</i>. New facility with warehouse capacity is under construction (second deepest port on the East Coast with no dredging). New port director.</p> <p>Designing a <i>ferry system</i> between Eastport and Lubec.</p>
Environmental Education		<p><i>Cobscook Bay Maritime Institute</i> (5 days/summer in 1996 and 1997).</p> <p><i>Historic McCurdy's Museum Project</i> includes smokehouse museum, community consignment store, community "common" (6 minute documentary, designated "historic", seeking funds). Recently rejected for \$400,000 CDBG grant.</p> <p><i>Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project</i> ("Seaview Project", wet laboratory, is under construction at Shead High School in Eastport; marine resources curriculum created there. Water quality training, sampling, and red tide monitoring..</p> <p><i>Workshops</i> sponsored by Quoddy Regional Land Trust on composting. Guided <i>walking tours</i>. <i>Quoddy Trails Guide</i>.</p>
Clam Fishing Industry	None	<i>Cobscook Clam Restoration</i>

		<p><i>Project:</i> 200,000 seed clams from the Beals Island Hatchery planted in 8 locations in Cobscook Bay by the end of 1995. In 1996, 2,000 acres of clam flats re-opened. One of these sites (125 acres) has produced a minimum of \$10,000 worth of “clam landings” per month since opening in December, 1996.</p> <p>Volunteer samplers reduced time to sample and re-open flats from 5 to 2 years.</p> <p>Indicators created; measurements expected in the fall of 1997</p>
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## Civic Capacity

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Institutional Structure	None	<p><i>Sustainable Cobscook Community Alliance</i> started, created a Mission Statement, committees, and then disbanded (January 14, 1997) as a formal entity. Some of the committees and their projects continue (e.g., Economic Development, Environment, Community Cooperation). Others (e.g., Education) have ceased to function.</p> <p><i>Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project</i> initiated, expanded, and funded.</p>
Office	None	None for the Alliance. Economic Development coordinated by Dianne Tilton from her Sunrise County Economic Council’s office in Machias. Will Hopkins manages the

		Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project from his home office in Eastport.
Staff	None	Alliance hired a person very part-time briefly to provide secretarial support.  Will Hopkins' salary comes from non-Ford Foundation grants.  Dianne Tilton's salary is paid by her organization.
Leadership	Emerging leader: Dianne Tilton (working with Lubec economic development people)	Two tiers of leaders: Dianne Tilton and Will Hopkins gained skills, experiences through training, workshops, site visits, technical and personal support from the Maine Community Foundation staff. Ron Kilby was active at one phase, but withdrew because of work conflicts. Others (e.g., John Pike Grady, Jim Dow, Chet Childs, Charlie Lewis, Paul Crandall) play less prominent overall but project-important leadership roles.
Volunteers	None (around Cobscook Bay projects)	Many for the Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project (e.g., students, scientists, government staff, local fishermen).  Varying smaller numbers for other, economic development projects (e.g., Lubec Landmarks organized by volunteers to oversee McCurdy Project. Their mission is "identifying and developing sustainable uses for historically and culturally significant sites in Lubec. They are now tackling the Quoddy Head Lighthouse.) Biggest obstacle is lack of time.
Community Presence	None	Significant (e.g., news articles, <i>Cobscook Clam News</i> , media interviews, meeting attendance, volunteer involvement)

Attitude towards Change	Resistant; “wait-and-whine”; inward-looking; insular; victim mentality	<p>Sense of hope; willing to take some initiatives (e.g., ferry system); able to collaborate (e.g., meet together, attend meetings in other towns, share teachers)</p> <p>Committees drew representatives from towns, especially from Lubec and Eastport, together (e.g., work cooperatively; trust developed).</p>
Project Development	Few people (i.e., Dianne Tilton, Lubec Chamber of Commerce, local economic development staff) doing planning and visioning work (e.g. 2001 Project)	Multiple sources for projects -- many people were/are associated with the Cobscook Bay Community Alliance activities. Dianne Tilton with Sunrise County Economic Council and Will Hopkins with the Cobscook Clam Restoration Project play key roles as catalysts, facilitators, conveyors.
Human Development	Opportunity presented to Dianne Tilton and Will Hopkins by Maine Community Foundation	Significant personal and organizational growth for these two leaders, e.g., trip to the Northwest Policy Center; Washington County Leadership Institute training (January, 1997); and Appalachia Center for Economic Networks training.
Project Implementation	Many people scattered in different places with different ideas and priorities.	Projects emanating from committees. Projects are the organizing focus for implementation.
Partnerships/Organizational Links	None	<p>Many collaborations via projects (e.g., Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project links with the Beals Island Laboratory/U. of Maine at Machias; The Nature Conservancy (via Jim Dow’s involvement); Shead High School in Eastport; Maine Dept. of Marine Resources and Dept. of Environmental Protection).</p> <p>Three communities (Pembroke, Perry, Eastport) require “conservation hours” to be performed in order to purchase a commercial clam harvest license. Each town sells 15-30</p>

		<p>licenses per year.</p> <p>Economic Development Committee held meetings on Passamaquoddy Tribal lands in encourage their participation.</p> <p>Economic projects partner with government (e.g., Eastport and Lubec officials).</p> <p>Maritime Institute affiliated with Suffolk University.</p>
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## Economic Development

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Economic Philosophy	<p>Individual entrepreneurship; natural resources-based economy; seeking large employers</p> <p>Sunrise County Economic Council - grass-roots organization with a focus on traditional economic development</p>	<p>economic networks; many small-scale employers; incremental improvements over time</p> <p>Sunrise County Economic Council - oriented towards sustainable development (e.g., mandate to buy from within Washington County)</p>
Economic Conditions	<p>High unemployment; poverty; hopelessness</p>	<p>Over 100 jobs created in Washington County over past few years via small-scale businesses. Economy improved generally.</p> <p>Recent announcement that Guildford (textile manufacturing factory) is closing in Eastport (loss of 90 jobs). Instead of panicking, community, with support from city manager, are organizing and meeting.</p> <p>Still difficult to retain young people. A few pockets of newcomers in Eastport (e.g., some people from</p>

		<p>California).</p> <p>Unemployment in Lubec is still twice the state average at 16-17%.</p>
Marketing	<p>Individual</p> <p>Two yellow pages for communities in the Cobscook region.</p>	<p>Regional avenues (e.g., <i>Business Directory</i> compiled which includes “hidden” people such as the self-employed and people who do not advertise).</p> <p>Promote blueberry and cranberry industries (grant funded for out-reach person)</p>
New Businesses		<p>Reviving the clam industry</p> <p>Sea cucumber industry (helped woman develop a business plan; limit to sustainable harvest levels)</p> <p>“Marinet” or marine industry sectoral network (idea proposed after D. Tilton was trained by ACENet).</p>
Private Sector Investments	Places closed	<p>New seafood retail and wholesale store (Cobscook Bay Seafood) opened in Eastport. Eastport Lobster and Fish Company (a restaurant and gift shop) opened in the old “Cannery” restaurant site which had been closed since the 1980’s. Hire 35 seasonal people.</p> <p>New Bangor Savings Bank built on Washington Street in Eastport (rather than improve downtown office).</p> <p>Housing units fixed up in Lubec (\$200,000 HUD/CDBG grant).</p> <p>Computer in Eastport (result of NYNEX overcharge case).</p>
Expand Businesses		<p><i>Sunrise County Farmers Market</i> - 2 sites operating very successfully.</p>

		<p><i>Yellow Birch Farm</i> became a community supported agriculture business in January, 1997.</p> <p><i>Quoddy Maritime Museum</i> (funds given for brochure; successful summer with their Border Crafts shop).</p>
Access to Capital	Banks	<p><i>Cobscook Microloan Program</i> (\$150,000 from the Maine Community Block Grant to finance small business development. One criterion is adherence to sustainable development principles).</p>

## Political Influences

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Influence Policy Agendas		<p>Maine Economic Growth Council (vision for state includes “health of natural resources”).</p> <p>Maine Rural Development Council (got them to host a meeting outside of Augusta or Portland and to invite unemployed people as participants).</p> <p>State Dept. of Transportation is considering seeking federal money for a Cobscook ferry system.</p> <p>State Dept of Environmental Protection committed \$26,280 for Pembroke in 1995 to replace septic systems that pollute and close clam flats. Additional funds awarded in 1996 to other communities.</p>

		<p>St. Croix International Waterway Commission invited Clam Restoration people to participate in planning discussions to restore their clam flats.</p> <p>Governor's key economic development agencies have provided over \$200,000 for Washington County projects and initiated a Coordinated State Investment Strategy as a pilot program in Washington County.</p>
Local Support		<p>City Manager of Eastport and Port Authority Director participated in celebration event of Cobscook Bay Project (March 8, 1997).</p> <p>State delegated authority to trained volunteers to conduct water quality sampling, surveys of septic systems, and monitoring of red tides - related to re-opening clam flats.</p>
Legal Actions		<p>Tried to change opening date for scallop season (organized scallopers; bill submitted; testimony given in Augusta; unsuccessful). Successful in reducing gear size, thereby keeping out big draggers.</p> <p>Commissioner of the Dept. of Marine Resources appointed (June 1997) Maine Soft Shell Council to advise legislators and commissioners. First meeting held in August, 1997.</p> <p>Ferry District law signed on June 12, 1997.</p> <p>Shellfish Conservation Committee and conservation ordinance approved by Town of Perry.</p>
Recognition		Chet Childs, Lubec Economic

		<p>Development Director, cites efforts of Cobscook Bay people in getting interest in and support for ferry system, waterfront redevelopment, inter-community cooperation.</p> <p>Dianne Tilton chosen for economic development award.</p>
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# Hardwick, Vermont

*This rural town of 2,500 to 3,000 people, located in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, is the market “hub” for the surrounding area which relies on forest products, agriculture, and tourism. Hardwick’s Main Street hit a low point in the winter of 1992 when three buildings in the center of town burned to the ground. The community had already been faced with economic hardship when the once thriving granite industry closed down decades earlier. Many residents travel Barre-Montpelier, Morrisville-Stowe, St. Johnsbury, or even as far as Burlington for work. The nearest interstate is 25 miles away. The challenge is how to revitalize Main Street, retain its “sense of place”, and create economic opportunities that make sense for the natural resources-based economy.*

Contact: Hardwick Area Chamber of Commerce (PO Box 111 Hardwick, VT 05843. Tel: 802/472-5906)  
Marilyn Rogerson, staff.

## Community Results<sup>9</sup>

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Defining Sustainability	Recognition of the need for a different way of thinking	Community-wide awareness and some sense of direction
Sense of the Region	No central focus	Began with revitalizing Main Street; expanded to other streets in Hardwick and businesses in other nearby towns. Sense of Hardwick as a regional “hub” (e.g. focus on Hardwick Area Chamber of Commerce)  Map of Hardwick and the region and sign created and displayed on Main Street
Community Attitude	Ambivalent. Not as negative as a few years before (especially after some of the “old boys” were sent to jail.	Hopeful. See some tangible results (e.g. new store uses, people helping each other)
Community Building/Business Development	Limited	<i>Business Visits</i> to learn about and from each other (on-going).  <i>Joint Marketing</i> (e.g. newsletter,

<sup>9</sup> Most of Hardwick’s Community Results are listed in the charts describing Civic Capacity and Economic Development.

		<p>brochure, fairs).</p> <p><i>Shop Local</i> campaigns (e.g. media).</p> <p><i>Renaissance Café</i>, non-profit gathering place closed; functions as a “parlor” for meetings and eating space for nearby deli business.</p>
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## Civic Capacity

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Institutional Structure	None	<p>Having been an informal entity (Hardwick Business Association) for several years, this group recently became an official program within the Hardwick Area Chamber of Commerce (improved institutional credibility and stability).</p> <p>Membership up to 60, with 6 new members from surrounding towns (July, 1997). 10 member Board of Directors. Meet the third Wednesday of each month in one of the 8 participating towns (Hardwick, Greensboro, Stannard, Walden, Woodbury, Wolcott, Craftsbury, and Cabot). Working on revising by-laws. Election of officers in September, 1997.</p>
Office	None	Use Chamber of Commerce’s telephone and mailing address
Staff	None	First part-time staff person hired in November, 1994; she (Linda Fox) left to start her own business; now on 4 <sup>th</sup> staff person (Marilyn Rogerson).
Leadership	Linda Fox and 4 women who have businesses on Main Street	<p>Board of Directors are emerging as active practitioners.</p> <p>Marilyn Rogerson is a key person as coordinator.</p>

Volunteers	The few core participants	Mostly the same people with some additional new people from the Hardwick Area Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors. Additional volunteers help on specific projects.
Community Presence	Some visibility, but mostly patchwork pieces	More community-wide presence (e.g. monthly calendar of events, fairs, joint advertising)  Hardwick Area Chamber of Commerce wanted Hardwick Business Community to merge with them.
Attitude towards Change	Resistant. Negative image of themselves.	More supportive (e.g. willing to try new ideas; comments indicate a more positive self-image of town). More acceptance of people who are different (e.g. people talk to others whom they would not have spoken to in the past).  Still pockets of resistance and negativity.
Project Development		Project ideas come from staff person, Chamber members, and partners (e.g. PATCH, school system, artists).
Human Development		Career development (e.g. Linda Fox started as a volunteer; became a paid part-time staff person; created her own gourmet deli).
Project Implementation		Hardwick Business Association staff and a few core people initiated ideas. Since the merger with the Hardwick Area Chamber of Commerce, able to delegate some tasks to Chamber of Commerce members and volunteers.
Partnerships/Organizational Links	Unofficial links with Hardwick Area Chamber of Commerce through individuals (e.g. Jim Lovinsky)	Recent official merger with Hardwick Area Chamber of Commerce.  Trying to purchase a photocopier with PATCH (social services-oriented) to augment both organizations'

capacities.

## Economic Development

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Economic Philosophy	Individual entrepreneurship	Aspects of sustainable development (e.g. cooperative marketing, community-based development, increase local wealth, relate to social and quality of life aspects). Concerned about the quality of life of the whole community.
Economic Conditions	Depressed economy; many vacant storefronts	Megastores open within 15 minutes to 1.5 hours from Hardwick drawing away business from downtown (e.g. Home Depot, Staples, Wal Mart).  Some vacant stores, but others now occupied (e.g. Galaxy Bookstore occupies old bank building).  State-funded improvements in the summer of 1997 (e.g. repaved streets, additional handicapped access on sidewalks).
Marketing	Individual	Joint marketing (e.g. coupons, flyers). Chamber of Commerce project initiated to create a 8 town brochure to publicize the region.  <i>Shop Local Campaign</i> (e.g. business directory, calendar of events, spring and fall festivals). Chamber of Commerce project being developed to use local print media to advertise, conduct contests, and educate readers.  <i>Holiday Creative Marketing.</i> Thursday nights between Thanks-

		<p>giving and Christmas 1996 events; storefront businesses “sponsored” non-store front people (e.g. real estate agent stationed at hair dresser).</p> <p><i>Green Holiday Cards</i> with schedule of events sent to every household in Hardwick (1996).</p> <p><i>Map</i> of town and area indicating businesses was produced and hung on Main Street.</p>
Supporting Existing Businesses	None	<p><i>Walk around</i> to help business people learn from each other (on-going).</p> <p>Questionnaire to determine where people market over one week (December, 1994)</p> <p>Link business with education via program with 6<sup>th</sup> graders at the Hardwick Elementary School. 1996-7 students came to businesses.</p>
Starting and Nurturing New Businesses		<p>Some businesses closed; others moved to better locations (e.g. Galaxy Book Store, New-to-You, Just Fish, Green Mountain Merchandise).</p> <p>Artwork placed in vacant storefronts during Reggae Festival with signs to encourage rental.</p> <p>Three vacant storefronts are being converted into an art gallery. Only 2 vacant stores remain.</p>
Access to Capital	None	Working Capital Peer Lending Program for Northeast Kingdom has a group in Hardwick.
Non-monetary Exchange	None	Created <i>Buffalo Mountain Hours</i> (administered by Buffalo Mountain Coop via a newsletter listing needs and service offerings)

## Political Influences

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Political Threats	Local politicians are fearful of change, want to maintain their power	<p>Some change, though results not yet clear.</p> <p>Former Town Manager (Charlie Strafford) who participated in one of the Sustainable Community Workshops has since moved away. New manager, Dan Hill, is helpful in community-building efforts (e.g. town donated top soil and cleaned up debris for renovations to the elementary school's playground – a project being done entirely by volunteers).</p>

# Mt. Washington Valley, New Hampshire

*The Mt. Washington Valley region is a popular tourist destination in northern New Hampshire and a major crossroad for traffic across northern New England. This region, located two and one-half hours north of Boston consists of sixteen towns: Albany, Bartlett, Brownfield, Chatham, Conway, Eaton, Freedom, Fryeburg, Jackson, Madison, Ossipee, and Tamworth. Two of these communities are in Maine. The area's population is approximately 35,000 people, of whom many are young (26%). The median age is 37 and the median household income is \$28,100. The region's largest industry is tourism. Surrounded by the 750,000 acre White Mountain National Forest, the Valley is a year-round vacation place for people from many New England cities and towns as well as from Canada and other countries. The growing number of quality retail shops and name-brand factory outlets has made the Valley one of New England's major shopping destinations.*

Contact: Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council (MWVEC) (PO Box 1066. Conway, NH 03818. Tel: 603/447-6622. Margaret Howlett, Executive Director)

## Community Results<sup>10</sup>

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Defining Sustainability	Vague notion	<p>Broad public understanding (e.g. through projects, media stories).</p> <p>Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council group has a clear sense that economy is predicated on continually upgrading skills through education and training; they value environmental and "rural" quality of life as key ingredients in keeping and attracting residents and visitors (e.g. sustainability criteria for revolving loans).</p> <p>MWVEC hired its first full-time staff person (Margaret Howlett) based on promoting sustainability.</p>
Sense of the Region	Emphasis on Conway/North Conway	Broader sense of the Mt. Washington Valley as a region (e.g. moved office from North Conway to Conway;

<sup>10</sup> Many of the Community Results relate to Economic Development, summarized in a separate table.

		multi-community projects)
Transportation	Mostly automobile	<p>Emphasis on non-automobile travel (e.g. multi-purpose pathway for bicyclists, joggers, walkers). ISTEA grant received. Meetings to set priorities held.</p> <p>Fryeburg Airport expansion project is ahead of schedule.</p>
Education and Training	College of Lifelong Learning's Programs; NH Cooperative Extension Service	<p>MWVEC conducts workshops, conferences, luncheon speakers.</p> <p><i>Stitchers Project</i> to train local people to use machines fore making clothing (one group trained in May, 1995; hoping that Jobs Council from Concord, NH will take over program from MWVEC).</p> <p>Education and Health Committee members work on variety of schools-to-work type programs (e.g. Roundtable Community Dialogues; business in-put to high school curriculum; adult tutoring).</p> <p>A SCORE chapter was organized to take advantage of experienced retired executives (received chapter in 1997)</p>
Technology		<p>Energy Fair (May 22, 1997) organized by Natural Resources and Energy Subcommittee (20 vendors, Tour de Sol site).</p> <p>Technology Luncheon (May 21, 1997). Participants decided to expand technology network.</p> <p>Rural Technology Summit (September 18 and 19, 1997). Second such expo. Governor was keynote speaker. 450 people attended.</p>
Planning and Land Use Management		Had GIS maps produced and

distributed to each of the 12 towns to help with local decision-making

## Civic Capacity

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Institutional Structure	MWVEC was established in 1991; no committees; 40 members	<p>Mature organization with a clear sense of purpose, well-organized (e.g. 12 committees which interact with each other; every town represented on the Board of Directors; 250 members; growing number of members who commit to 4 year memberships; 40 major corporate members @\$75 and 6 associate annual sponsors @\$50)</p> <p>Received <i>Capacity Building Grant</i> (improve book-keeping procedures, develop policy manual, acquire insurance to protect board members)</p>
Office	Met in various offices (e.g. the North Country Chamber of Commerce, Memorial Hospital)	Donated space in Bank of NH in Conway
Staff	Volunteers	<p>Two paid staff; Executive Director hired in Winter, 1997. Transitioning from all-volunteer to a staff/volunteer organization.</p> <p>Funds from the Capacity Building Grant pays for the Executive Director for 2 years.</p>
Leadership	Cynthia Hall (first President), emerging leaders (Dave Sorensen, Steve Knox)	<p>Duo leadership team of Dave Sorensen and Steve Knox (President and Vice President); emerging leaders (e.g. George Epstein, Gail Paine, Chuck Henderson)</p> <p>Team has very close and satisfying working relationship.</p> <p>Significant percentage of Dave Sorensen's time is paid by his</p>

		<p>employer, NH Cooperative Extension Service.</p> <p>Excellent Board attendance and participation (e.g. people stay after meetings to chat, network).</p>
Project Development	Thinking, strategic planning stage	Evolve from community needs, defined by surveys, business visits, meeting discussions
Human Development		Changed people's lives and careers (e.g. new institutional and technical skills, experiences)
Project Implementation		Many projects coordinated, facilitated, implemented through committees under the overall guidance of the Board of Directors; closely tracked and nurtured by the President and Vice President; outcomes stressed, oral evaluations performed re: lessons learned; corrective actions needed
Partnerships	Set up as an institution connecting organizations	<p>Many partnerships with government agencies, non-profit organizations, business groups. Broad-based representation on Board of Directors (e.g. business, health care, education, environment)</p> <p>MWVEC consciously leaves marketing and tourism to the Conway Chamber of Commerce – establish distinct niche.</p>
Volunteers	Mainly Board members	Extensive number of volunteers. Committee and project volunteers do not have to be members.
Community Presence		Widespread visibility (e.g. monthly radio series and monthly cable t.v. show called "Valley at Work", newspaper articles, highly publicized public events, open houses, "Economically Speaking" quarterly newsletter, representative from each town on board.

		<p>President and Vice President go into the community to meet with people at their gathering spots.</p> <p>Executive Director introduced herself at a meeting of each town's Select Board.</p>
Advise and Support		Many people outside of MWVEC contact this group for assistance (e.g. politicians, business people, media)
Attitude towards Change	Positive. Used to influx of people and ideas.	Positive. Welcoming. Focus on results (MWVEC is delivering)
Spark for Sustainability		MWVEC. Planning now where funds will come from for executive Director after 3 year grant ends.

## Economic Development

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Economic Philosophy	Traditional economic development with an interest in sustainable development	Sustainable/community development. Create "economic opportunities". Looking at the human element in addition to the "bricks and mortar".
Economic Conditions	Booming economy centered around tourism; pockets of poverty	Expanding the number and contributions of economic "engines" (seeking a more diversified economic base), though still centered along the Conway/North Conway strip (build on existing infrastructure while preserving environment and rural lifestyle in nearby towns); hard time finding workers; problems with jobs not paying for benefits or being seasonal .
Access to Capital	Conway's Revolving Loan Program, funded by state grant	MWVEC's Revolving Loan program (received NH Office of State Planning and Town of Conway's approval to take over responsibility for this program).

		<p>First two repayments to MWVEC from Green Mountain Rifle Barrel (May, 1997). Sustainability criteria used to distribute loans (e.g. compatibility with environment and quality of life of region).</p> <p>MWVEC met with banks who committed to financially supporting the revolving loan program (Bank of NH on May 6, 1997; Berlin City Bank at end of May, 1997).</p> <p>Margaret Howlett, Executive Director, meets with potential applicants (e.g. food product company, printing company, home furnishing company) and helps them prepare (e.g. develop business plans).</p>
Identify Needs		<p>Business visitations (led to Stitchers Project; technology/Internet focus).</p> <p>Technology Survey in 1997 (results presented at luncheon in May; follow-up with network orientation).</p> <p>Visitors Survey (on-going effort; quarterly reports; funded by two businesses with intern assistance from UNH).</p> <p>Natural Resources &amp; Energy Committee survey to determine feasibility of a beef co-op (current).</p> <p><i>Mt. Washington Valley Vision 2020 Attitude Survey Salient Findings</i> prepared for MWVEC by Dr. Mark Okrant from Plymouth State College.</p>
Nurture New Businesses		<p>Workshops (e.g. two part series to help small businesses develop a financial plan, June 1997).</p>

		<p><i>Pumpkin Seed Project</i> (1,300 seeds collected last year; planted on Sherman Farm in 1997).</p> <p>Creating a chapter of Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE) to help new and existing businesses.</p>
Support Existing Businesses		<p><i>Business Visitation Program</i> uses volunteers to help organizations learn more about the local economy, understand their needs, and establish and maintain communications (training sessions held for volunteers and businesses selected for participation, May 1997). Linked to NH Dept. of Resources and Economic Development Business Visitation Program.</p> <p><i>Eggs and Issues Breakfast Program</i> to enable business people to network (starting up).</p> <p>One-stop <i>Business Center</i> (being investigated).</p> <p><i>Multi-use transportation pathway</i> paralleling congested Rout 16 to facilitate access to stores and encourage recreational tourism.</p>

## Political Influences

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Community Support		<p>1996: 9 of 12 towns supported MWVEC. In 1997, 11 of 12 supported MWVEC with financial contributions. Conway did not.</p> <p>All 12 towns represented on Board of Directors.</p>

Affect Policies		<p>Convince Maine DOT to support the largest ISTEA grant for non-automobile project (\$610,000 for multi-use transportation pathway).</p> <p>Maine DOT is conducting a bottoms-up process to decide how transportation funds should be allocated along Route 16 corridor.</p> <p><i>Tri-County Rail Project</i> proposed for economic development (Maine passed legislation to create a task force; NH is expected to follow).</p> <p>College for Lifelong Learning and MWVEC's Education and Health Committee influenced changes in college counseling services.</p>
Educate Political Leaders		<p>Dave Babson, legislator, is on Board. He initiated the beef co-op project.</p> <p>Some members of boards of selectmen are not coming to MWVEC board meetings on a regular basis. So, Executive Director went to their meetings. Their interest in outcomes, especially jobs and revenues.</p> <p>Series of workshops on local planning had low attendance. No longer offered.</p>
Invited as Representative		<p>Gail Paine, chair of Education and Health Committee, is on NH Dept of Education's Coos Steering Committee.</p>
Transfer of Authority		<p>Town of Conway approved transfer of power to MWVEC for revolving loan program (1997).</p>
Recognition		<p>Governor Shaheen spoke at MWVEC's annual meeting in November, 1996 (one of her first acts</p>

		as governor).
Political Threats		Still reluctance to let go of local perspective for regional one (e.g. resistance to share services).

# Northeast Stewardship Project: Concord, Vermont

*Concord, located in South Essex County in the North East Kingdom of Vermont, is the regional hub. It has a population of approximately 1,500 people. Essex County has a population of approximately 6,000 and is the least populated county in the state. Well-paying jobs are scarce and expectations are low. Many people's lives are linked to forestry. The Northeast Stewardship Project began by supporting the Natural Resources Program at Concord High School.*

Contact: Northeast Stewardship Office (PO Box 374, Concord, VT 05824. Tel: 802/695-1006. Jim Wood, staff).

## Community Results

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Defining Sustainability	No clue	Not much exposure. Core group is beginning to focus on community development through links to a natural resources based economy (e.g. forestry). Beginning sense of "hope" for the forests which had been clear-cut.
Sense of the Region	Emphasis on the town of Concord	Several years ago, moved from a town focus to a southern Essex County region. Now working on creating regional Natural Resource Center covering the entire North Country region.
Environmental Education	Natural Resources Program at the Concord High School started in 1991, had a regional advisory board, and was struggling against local opposition	<i>Natural Resources Program</i> is stable and has public support; 75 students from grades 7 through 12; aquaculture project (raised 1,000 rainbow trout from eggs which are marketed locally by students).
Employment Training	None	<i>Educational/economic development workshops</i> oriented towards providing skills for foresters, loggers, operators. 1997 Sustainable Forestry Series. As many as 20 participants attend a workshop; 9 held or planned. "First Book of Forest Land

		<p>Ownership” developed and distributed.</p> <p><i>Natural Resource Center</i> for southern Essex County. Feasibility study being conducted by Yellow Wood Associates. Seeking local political support.</p>
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## Civic Capacity

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Institutional Structure	None for the NE Stewardship Project; regional board for the Natural Resources Program at the Concord High School	Entity, board of directors, Mission Statement, Work Plan
Office	None	Rents space from North Country Environmental and Forestry. Own phone and computer; use NCE&F's equipment
Staff	None	Part-time local person (Jim Wood) who was active on the board; delayed hiring anyone and then hired a woman from Burlington, Vermont who didn't work out. Hired a part-time (8 hrs) secretary who didn't work out; now hiring another person
Leadership	Key political figures (e.g. Brendan Whittaker), non-profit directors (e.g. Charles Towne), teachers (e.g. John Irwin, Tom Smith), some grass-roots people	Jim Wood has emerged as key leader in the group and community. Similar blend of board members. Most are people who get things done.
Volunteers	Board members	Board members plus getting some volunteers via workshops and Nature Resources Center Project
Community Presence	None	Limited but growing (e.g. meetings with town officials, workshops, developing a newsletter)
Attitude towards Change	Resistant to outsiders and to new ideas	Improving a bit especially since a local person (Jim Wood) became staff person; beginning recognition that NE Stewardship Project can help improve

		people's lives (e.g. employment skills and opportunities)
Project Development	Concord High School Program was the impetus for the NE Stewardship Project	Evolving to expand scope beyond the high school program (e.g. Natural Resource Center)
Human Development	Outlet for the two teachers at the Concord High School who were feeling beleaguered	Personal growth for Jim Wood as a leader; important opportunity to contribute to his "home" region (Will Staats); "uplifting" to work with genuine people (Bren Whittaker); frustrating for many people (e.g. length and difficulty getting started, organized, productive)
Project Implementation	Few people do all the work	Still rely on few people, especially Jim Wood; some board members do not actively participate. Setting up staff and networking with other organizations and departments (e.g. coordinating with Forests and Parks on work session/meeting about Vermont's new timber cutting bill)
Organizational Links	Direct relationship with Concord High School; institutional links (through board members' presence rather than institutional partnerships) with Fairbanks Museum, Vermont Land Trust	<p>Goal of NSP is to select board members who serve as links to organizations: Vermont Land Trust, Northeast Vermont Development Association, NH Fish and Wildlife, local business community, Fairbanks Museum, Northern Forest Roundtable, Concord Natural Resource Program, and local landowners.</p> <p>Many board members are local natural resource professional.</p> <p>Developed partnerships with Vermont Department of Forest and Parks. Beginning to link with Northeast Vermont Development Association via Brendan Whittaker. NE Stewardship's environmental and educational niche is useful to Fairbanks Museum</p>

## Economic Development

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Economic Philosophy	Traditional economic development – deplete natural resources; non-diversity of economic base	Understand that it is necessary to break the boom and bust cycle of forestry practices; question is how to do this over the long-run
Economic Conditions	Depressed economy; clear cutting of forests	People still struggle to make a living; poorest region of state; no quick economic turn-around expected
Skills, Training, Education	Limited, available through government agencies	Workshops; concept of the <i>Natural Resource Center</i> to link training with jobs/careers
Marketing	None	Short-term project to sell local crafts (a few people benefited for a few months; project ceased when staff person (Barbara Thomas) left  <i>Natural Resource Center</i> will focus on marketing.
New Businesses	Concord High School's aquaculture project	Same (sold 15-20 pounds of stock trout in 1997; previous year's fish died)  Small wood lot management technology ( <i>timber extracting machine</i> ) being developed by John Irwin and Concord High School students  Want to encourage value-added forest products  <i>Natural Resource Center</i> will help create new businesses and expand existing ones

## Political Influences

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Influence Policy Agendas	Losing battle with School Board over Natural Resources Program	<p>Political climate in Concord has improved (e.g. change in some of the School Board Members, support for the Natural Resources Program and the Concord High School; improvements in the Select Board)</p> <p>Statewide climate has improved in favor of sustainable forestry practices (e.g. heavy cutting bill enacted)</p>
Local Support	Hostility; resentment of change	Opposition is either underground or gone; beginning to meet with Select Boards to solicit their support for the center; positive feedback (e.g. Center idea is being talked about in the “gossip spots” (e.g. post offices, town clerks, Mom and Pop stores)
Legal Actions		July 1, 1997 law adopted which requires a forest management plan in order to cut more than 40 acres
Personal Recognition		Jim Wood hired by Larry Brown (major past clear-cutter) to do his forest management plan

# STA-NORTH, New Hampshire

*The STA-NORTH region of northwestern New Hampshire includes, primarily, three towns of approximately 4,000 people with the village of Groveton in the township of Northumberland the largest at 2,500, Stratford next at 950 and Stark the smallest with 500 people. These three townships are located within Coos County which has the slowest increase in population and employment of the ten NH counties since 1920. The name reflects the desire of some people to entice new residents and visitors to travel north, beyond the southern tier of NH communities and destination places.*

Contact: STA-NORTH Office (PO Box 11 Groveton, NH 03582. Tel: 603/636-2400). President, Sharon White (Tel: 603/636-2188).

## Community Results<sup>11</sup>

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Defining Sustainability	No understanding; promoting traditional economic development	Same orientation by the community; some recognition by STA-NORTH board members that development needs to be community-based
Sense of the Region	No sense that Groveton, Stark, and Straford towns form a region	Still three separate towns; no sense of region but some sharing of resources (e.g. share library services, ambulance, banking, schools, summer recreation)
Tourism (Marketing and Distribution)	No special programs	<p><i>Groveton Youthworks/Picnic Tables</i> at tourist spots (3 built by students from all 3 towns; one stolen in 1996 after being well used).</p> <p><i>Crafters &amp; Flea Market</i> (Summer 1996 mostly rained out; Summer 1997 for 8 Sundays – 20-40 vendors). Owners of field informed STA-NORTH that it would not be available next summer for the market.</p> <p><i>Reasons to STA-NORTH</i> (business directories, 2 editions in 1994)</p>

<sup>11</sup> STA-North's Community Results are closely linked to its Economic Development initiatives, which appear in a separate table.

		<p><i>Two Color Map Brochure</i> of cottage industries (completed in July, 1997; will be distributed to businesses along Routes 3 &amp; 110)</p> <p><i>Catalogue</i> of local businesses (collected some information; turned over to people creating an Internet version)</p>
Revenue producing environmental and economic development	None	Studied feasibility of a milk bottling plant (not now viable); studied feasibility of a water bottling plant (potentially viable, needs more work)
Leveraged Actions (with other organizations)	None	<p>Helped establish a child care center in the Groveton United Methodist Church (handled forms for start-up funding)</p> <p>Market tied to June 29, 1997 celebration of 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of masons- linked to opening of museum on Potter Farm (site of market)</p> <p>Co-sponsored a variety of workshops with Northeast Stewardship project/UVM Extension Service, UNH, NH Department of Labor, Berlin NH Employment Security Office, Institute for Cooperative Community Development, NH Small Business Development Center</p>

## Civic Capacity

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Institutional Structure	STA-NORTH was formed in 1992 to diversify local economy (Board of Directors; general membership; strategic planning process)	<p>Revised by-laws to lower quorum</p> <p>Will decide in the fall, 1997 if STA-NORTH should continue as an organization, join with coos County Economic Development Corporation,</p>

		or disband
Office	Met in a bank or in a school	<p>Establish an office in donated space provided by Berlin Bank (January, 1995)</p> <p>Provide office space to Lisa Maxwell, hired in August, 1997 as executive director of the Coos County Economic Development Corporation</p>
Staff	No staff, President Kay Doherty did staff work	No staff now, Kay Doherty was part-time staff person until June, 1997
Leadership	Kay Doherty, key person Additional core group (Sharon White, Bob Carney)	<p>Sharon White is President and a potential emerging leader.</p> <p>Core board members are the same now as in 1993, but Bob Carney (long-time treasurer) is moving away and S. White wants to devote more time to her profession.</p> <p>Kay Doherty is a member (not on the board)</p>
Volunteers	The few core board members	<p>Some of the original volunteers dropped out.</p> <p>Core board members are burned out.</p> <p>A few other people are involved in the market project.</p>
Community Presence	None	<p>Limited visibility through quarterly newsletter <i>Local Economy Gazette</i> &amp; affiliation with Crafters Market</p> <p>Significant amount of donations (estimated value of more than \$32,000 as of September, 1996) for a poor region. Sources include town dollars, government grant, business donations of meeting space, supplies, equipment, artists' donated talents, &amp; landowners use of field for market.</p>
Attitude towards Change	Very resistant to newcomers, new ideas	Same climate of hostility and suspicion

		Limited support (4 business memberships)
Project Development	Ideas came from core members (e.g. bottling plant, crafters market, directory)	Recently (June 1997) experimenting with being community-based – exploring an idea for a welcome wagon which was suggested by a respondent to a STA-NORTH survey
Human Development	Outlet for several people, most who moved into the region a number of years ago	Personal growth for key participants (especially Kay Doherty, Sharon White, Bob Carney)
Project Implementation	Few core members do all the work	Beginning to let go; others taking some responsibility (e.g. market). Still, few people do most of the work
Partnerships/Organizational Links	North Country Council helped establish STA-NORTH (by-laws, strategic planning sessions); no other partnerships	Some cooperative support from Atlantic Center for the Environment/Quebec Labrador Foundation (e.g. funding of intern, foreign visits); Society for the Protection of NH Forests (Paul Leveille's participation)

## Economic Development

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Economic Philosophy	Traditional economic development, with an interest in a regional base	Primarily the same, with some recognition that the economic sources need to come from community people (versus firms, companies)
Economic Conditions	Rock bottom; mill's existence questionable	Climbing back economically; mill is in stable ownership; some new businesses by young people; not necessarily satisfying jobs  Some doubts about the economic viability of the 3 town area – perhaps a larger region makes more economic sense
Marketing	Individual marketing	Primarily still individual marketing, though some group marketing (e.g. business directory; map identifying home-based businesses)
Distribution	Individual distribution	Mostly individual distribution with the

		beginning of a group distribution (e.g. crafters market in 1996 and 1997).  Started a Christmas catalogue project (idea taken over by people using an Internet site).
Skills, Training, Education	None	Conduct workshops in 1996 and 1997 (e.g. aspiring entrepreneurs, starting new businesses, marketing); publicize training and educational offerings by other organizations, via newsletter
New businesses, careers	None	None, still rely on adding responsibility to existing jobs/life commitments. People who are in business dropped out of STA-NORTH (e.g. Micheal Phillips)
Non-traditional techniques	Private exchanges, bartering	Community Assisted Agriculture for apples at Lost Cider Farm (not connected with STA-NORTH)

## Political Influences

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Influence Policy Agendas	None	None- stay out of local politics
Local Support	None	Increased financial contributions from all 3 towns in 1995, 1996, 1997. Significant amounts, given low populations and poor economy (e.g. \$1,000 from Northumberland/ Groveton; \$500 from Stratford; \$500 from Stark).  Board of Selectmen support for bottling plant on town-owned land in Groveton

# Western Mountains Alliance/Sustain Western Maine (Farmington)

*The western Maine mountains region consists of small typically New England towns with rolling hills, working farms, lakes, fertile river valleys, and forests. Forestry, agriculture, outdoor recreation, and light manufacturing are the key economic activities. This large region is 12,020 square miles or almost 38% of the state. It comprises four counties: Oxford, Franklin, Somerset and Piscataquis. All of Maine's 50 highest mountains are in this region. The estimated 152, 440 people living here in 1994 is a little more than 12% of the state's population. The focus of this project is on Franklin County and adjacent towns. Its population is 40,000 with Farmington as its hub (6,000 people).*

Contact: Western Mountains Alliance and Sustain Western Maine. PO Box 29. Farmington, ME 04938. (207) 778-7274. Debbie Burd, staff.

## Community Results<sup>12</sup>

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Defining Sustainability	No clue; confusion over its meaning and validity	Better understanding through discussion and development of mission, goals, and indicators; best understood through projects (e.g. Mission Statement, draft list of indicators; newspaper articles)
Sense of the Region	Limited (e.g. titles of organizations like Western Mountains Alliance)	Significant use of regional titles, growing sense of regional identity, regional partnerships (e.g. Sustain Western Maine, Mountains County Heritage Project, Healthy Communities Coalition)
Community Network/Technology	Rural Leaders Forum – regional group of leaders from the public and private sectors (1991)	<i>Electronic Grange Network</i> created by Infrastructure Committee (non-profit organization; equipment; community bulletin board; building purchased; work plan devised)  Community Access on-line interactive system, staffed by welfare (ASPIRE)

<sup>12</sup> This table focuses on community results which incorporate aspects of environment, health care, education, cultural heritage, technology, and regional identity. Economic and civic capacity/human capital results are displayed in separate tables.

		recipients.
Cultural Heritage		<i>Mountains Counties Heritage Project</i> to identify, publicize, and encourage use of cultural, historical, and recreational places (e.g. Maine Mountain Counties Heritage News, website; <a href="http://www.MAINE-MTS.org">http://www.MAINE-MTS.org</a> , guidebook; folklife survey; map; trail; \$15,000 grant)
Social Services/Health	Health Community Coalition – project of the Western Mountains Alliance through 1992. Partnered with Youth Leadership Program in 1993.	<p><i>Parish Nursing Project</i> launched in January, 1997 to link physical and spiritual care (2 parish nurse hired; 10 church communities; changed how a doctor practices).</p> <p><i>Families Development Project</i> to get 100 families out of poverty within 3 years (partnership with Western Maine Community Action; changed orientation of that organization; 50% of those families work part or full-time)</p> <p><i>Welfare-to-Work (Franklin Careers) Project</i> initiated in 1997 with a goal of ensuring jobs for 484 AFDC people in the next 5 years (collaboration formed; 3 public forums; strategy devised; commitments made for implementation).</p> <p><i>Mt. Visions</i> group formed by mid-level social service people to prepare for applying for federal grants (establish group and committee structure; political advice)</p> <p><i>Franklin Community Partnership Project</i> started in August 1995 (provided funds to WMA/SWM)</p>
Community/Environment Education		<i>Foothills Lands &amp; Water Association's</i> annual October fairs

		<p>begun in 1994 to provide information about environment, natural resources-based economy, eco-technology organizations, projects, people in the region.</p> <p><i>Water Quality Monitoring Project</i> at Mt. Blue High School in 1995 (linked students with university professor to improve lakes).</p> <p><i>Rural Youth Leadership Program</i> at Kingfield Elementary School in 1995-6 and Strong Middle School in 1996-7 (group trip; book of youths' stories; leadership skills)</p> <p><i>Franklin County Economic Development Network</i> to support individual and organizational development strategies for sustainable development</p> <p><i>Maine Festival</i> (1996 &amp; 1997). Only region in the state with own tent (Mountain Counties Tent). Include representation from 2 large tourism councils which are comprised of almost 20 chambers of commerce, a living history center, a logging museum, the University of Maine and WMA.</p>
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## Civic Capacity

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Institutional Structure	Western Mountains Alliance started in 1996; Sustain Western Maine launched in fall 1993 as a program within WMA (advisory committee; planning discussions)	SWM has formal institutional structure (21 member Steering Committee; Executive Committee; 5 working groups with goals and project agendas; adopted by-laws; Mission Statement)

	No clarity between WMA and SMA (confusion over authority, responsibility, roles)	Clarity between WMA and SWM (worked out relationships; project locations) though public views the two organizations together
Office	Shared with WMA	Shared with WMA
Staff	Part-time staff, shared with WMA (Edie Smith). Paid from Ford grant.	Part-time staff, shared with WMA (Debbie Burd since 1994). No identified staff funding source.
Leadership	Key leaders from WMA – Scott Planting and Warren Cook	Same key leaders plus emerging leaders (Debbie Burd, Jeff Barnum, Bruce Hazard, Abe Kreworeuka, etc.)  Role of staff person evolved from being primarily the “doer” to “facilitator”
Project Development	Began with defining working groups and projects	Evolved projects based more on "community building rather than hardware”
Human Development		Changed individuals lives (e.g. new skills, new careers)
Project Implementation	A few projects defined by each working group; responsibility of staff person and working group volunteers	Many semi-autonomous projects, many partnerships and collaborations from within and outside WMA/SWM; cross working group linkages.  Sufficient funding for projects to last beyond end of Ford grant.
Partnerships	Steering Committee designed to include representatives of regional organizations	Initiate and join many collaborative projects (e.g. Families Development Partnership; Welfare-to-Work Project; Healthy Community Coalition); Franklin Community partnership.
Advise and Support		Provide strategic advice to other organizations working in the region (e.g. Wilderness Society’s 2 day workshop in March, 1997; Northern Forest Alliance’s agenda)
Volunteers	Many for WMA	Increase in number of volunteers for WMA and SWM driven by number and nature of projects

Community/Regional Presence	WMA exist; credible leaders	WMA & SWM visible, credible (e.g. news articles, newsletter, participation in many other organizations' activities, invited to participate)
Attitude towards Change	Open to new ideas and organizations; some position-taking (especially by a Green Party SWM Board member)	Open, inviting. Green Party person moved out of state.
Spark for Sustainability	Initiated by WMA and "housed" in SWM	Both WMA and SWM

## Economic Development

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Economic Philosophy	Community economic development	Community development before community economic development
Economic Conditions	<p>Natural resources based economy (lumber, wood and paper products, tourism, farming, some light manufacturing)</p> <p>Economic base is not defined by geographical territory. Tolerant of newcomers and new ideas</p>	<p>Unemployment decreased, but still higher than state average (8%); 1993-9 dramatic increase in number of incidents where police called</p> <p>Same</p>
Access to Capital	Traditional banks	<i>Peer Lending Program</i> (1 group trained and borrowed money; Fleet Bank is new enterprise agent)
Marketing		<p><i>Franklin Heritage Loop</i> (in product development phase).</p> <p><i>Marketing Campaign</i> initiated by WMA in April, 1997 aided by a consultant. WMA's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be celebrated in October, 1997 with 2 events.</p> <p><i>Neighbor-to-Neighbor, Friend-to-Friend</i> campaigns to encourage "folk economics" (start-up phase)</p>
Distribution		<i>Western Mountains Community Market</i> at Fair Grounds in

		<p>Farmington for vendors in the region to sell their products every Saturday from May 24, 1997 through November 1, 1997.</p> <p>Second phase being considered: develop a working forum (committee established; working on Market Project)</p>
Skills, Training, Education		<p><i>Electronic Grange Network</i> (trains equipment operators; lists jobs; publicize meetings and minutes)</p> <p>Partnership with the University of Maine/Farmington to provide evening series of seminars for small businesses (fall 1997).</p> <p><i>Welfare-to-Work Project</i> will train and place AFDC people in jobs and provide emergency support (getting started; committee working)</p> <p><i>Leadership Summit</i> hosted by WMA in partnership with 8 other leadership programs on September 29-30, 1997 (14 workshops on leadership skills, Economic Impact Expo, network opportunities).</p> <p>Two evening workshops on development co-sponsored with the University of Maine at Farmington (spring 1997).</p> <p><i>Western Maine Rural Development Forum</i> sponsored by the Maine Rural Development Council (including WMA) on July 15, 1997.</p>
New businesses, careers		<p>MaineWest, a consulting partnership between two members of the Infrastructure Committee, is a “virtual Internet domain serving western</p>

		<p>Maine” (brochure).</p> <p><i>Cyber-networked café</i> being established by a member of the Infrastructure Committee (building purchased; donated equipment available; services being designed)</p>
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## Political Influences

TOPIC	MID 1993	MID 1997
Influence Policy Agendas of Other Organizations	WMA – 21 member board of major sector policy makers	<p>Change some of the directions of the Androscoggin Valley Council of Government’s project (e.g. transportation policies).</p> <p>Influenced Northern Forest Alliance and Wilderness Society.</p>
Invited as Representative		<p>Debbie Burd serves on the Board of the Natural Resources Council of Maine (as representative from New Vineyard); D. Burd is on the Health Reach Network; D. Burd participates on International Paper Company’s Environmental Pollution Board (provide advice on clear cutting referendum and on water prevention program); D. Burd sits on Steering Committee of Maine USDA-RD 5 year strategic Rural Development Plan.</p> <p>Bruce Hazard is a board member of the Maine Art Commission (founding member of the Heritage Tourism Task Force)</p>
Chosen by Politicians for Special Task/s		Governor’s Office asked WMA/SWM (D. Burd) to organize a regional conference for small businesses (completed and requested to do so again in 1998).

		<p>WMA is a co-sponsor of the Governor's Blaine House Conference.</p> <p>D. Burd serves on the Consumer Education Board to Public Utilities Commission (result of the utilities restructuring and 1997 legislation).</p>
Educate Political Leaders		<p><i>Western Maine Legislative Caucus</i> formed in 1995 to educate and communicate with state legislators.</p> <p><i>Breakfasts</i> on topical issues (e.g. welfare reform, educational reform). 20 or more legislators attend from both political parties.</p>
Cited as "Model"		<p><i>Healthy Community Coalition</i> cited as a model by Maine Director of Public Health (Dr. Nora Mills) in May, 1997</p>
Political Office		<p>Jeff Barnum ran unopposed for school board (SAU 9) which covers 9 towns</p>
Political Threats	<p>SWM Board Member from the Green Party precipitated some internal tensions.</p>	<p>Infrastructure Committee members were rejected by teachers when they offered to teach computer skills. They were also denied use of the high school for their cable t.v. access site.</p>