



Project Impacts

NSRC-FUNDED RESEARCH FINAL REPORT

Communities in Transition: Recreation, Tourism, and Resource Dependency in the Northern Forest

PROJECT AWARD YEAR AND TITLE:

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*People and Communities in Transition: Recreation,
Tourism and Resource Dependency in the Northern
Forest Region*

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The Northern Forest region is characterized by resource dependent communities that have historically undergone a succession of land use changes. To explore the economic, social, and environmental impacts of these changes on the communities and their residents, NSRC researchers conducted case studies of three representative towns.

Millinocket, Maine, once a thriving timber-based community built around the mills of Great Northern Paper Company, now faces an uncertain future with mill closures and out-migration of young people seeking better jobs. Bethlehem, New Hampshire, originally a farming community, has historically ridden a roller coaster of booms and busts in the tourism and service industry. Canaan, Vermont, once the home of Ethan Allen, Inc., the largest furniture manufacturer east of Michigan, is now looking to the tourism and service industry to support its unsettled economy.

Interviews of 26 residents, including long-term community members, in-migrating newcomers, and recreational homeowners, across all three towns, provided an initial glimpse of the relationships among residents, the land, and development. Conflict between long-term residents and newcomers reflects different values related to environmental issues, posting of land, and resource harvesting traditions. Yet, there are commonalities, such as respect for private property rights, protection of water quality, and control over second home development, which may allow for discussion of land and stewardship issues and civic engagement by newcomers.