

# THE PENOBSCOT VALLEY COMMUNITY GREENPRINT

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY  
THROUGH REGIONAL COLLABORATION



A PROJECT OF THE MAINE COMMUNITYSCAPE INITIATIVE

THE TRUST *for* PUBLIC LAND

CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE

# THE PENOBSCOT VALLEY



The Penobscot Valley, stretching inward from Maine's central coast, evokes an idyllic aspect of American life, where people know their neighbors, children play outside, and green and open spaces are more prominent than gray stretches of concrete. As one resident puts it, there are "lots of small town features, but we're not missing any of the creature comforts."

☞ {IT'S ABOUT BEING} COMFORTABLE WHERE YOU LIVE. MY KIDS CAN WALK TO SCHOOL. THERE ARE PARKS AND PLACES TO PLAY. I DON'T HAVE TO WATCH THEM EVERY MINUTE. WE HAVE ACCESS TO...PLACES THAT YOU CAN GO AND ENJOY THE OUTSIDE NOT TOO FAR FROM HERE. ☞

—NICKI FARNAM,  
BANGOR CITY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

☞ PEOPLE LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER IN MAINE, PEOPLE CARE FOR EACH OTHER. STRANGERS TALK TO ONE ANOTHER. THERE'S A LOT OF TRUST. ☞

—RYAN WARNER,  
HOLDEN CONSERVATION  
COMMISSION

One of the region's most defining landscapes—the 350-mile-long Penobscot River—draws fishermen from all over and its surrounding forests provide a wide range of outdoor sports and recreation. Historic town centers offer a quality of place that is disappearing in much of America, but holding strong here.

This quality of life is valued. A 2008 opinion survey showed residents are highly satisfied with the experience of living in the Penobscot Valley. Much of this satisfaction is derived from an active outdoor lifestyle that takes advantage of the surrounding forests, rivers, and streams.

This lifestyle is also the key to the region's economic vitality.

However, residents have begun to notice subtle changes.

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COVER: Early Autumn in the Penobscot Valley. PHOTO BY ÁSGEIR J. WHITNEY; ABOVE: Outdoor recreation along a bike path in the Penobscot Valley. PHOTO BY JEFF KIRLIN; RIGHT: A covered bridge at historic Leonard's Mills in Bradley, ME. PHOTO BY ÁSGEIR J. WHITNEY.

## THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Population shifts from the urban core of Bangor to outlying communities are dispersing development and creating a need for more roads to handle more cars that generate more traffic. The Penobscot Valley's population has increased at a slightly higher rate (4.23%) than Maine's overall (3.7%), and it is projected to increase another six percent by 2030, primarily in suburban areas. In response, forested areas, wetlands, and farmlands are slowly being converted to houses and commercial areas.

Not as many fishermen are coming, because sea-run species have become endangered by man-made revisions to the river's flow. And manufacturing industries, like lumber and shipbuilding, are being replaced by a service-based economy that favors education, health care, and residential development.

Today, the Penobscot Valley's challenge is to continue to grow while maintaining the sense of place and quality of life that its people cherish.

☞ IN THE LONG RUN,  
PEOPLE ARE NOT GOING TO BE  
ATTRACTED TO THIS AREA IF  
IT LOOKS LIKE EVERY OTHER  
BLIGHTED LANDSCAPE. ☞

—BRAD COFFEY,  
BANGOR RESIDENT





## WHAT IS A GREENPRINT?

A Greenprint is a strategic planning, communication, and decision-making process based on local priorities designed to meet community park, recreation, and environmental goals. A Greenprint results in a set of color-coded maps, interactive web-based tools, and action strategies designed to:

- Connect where people live to the natural environment
- Preserve pedestrian-friendly communities that reduce traffic and improve personal health and well-being
- Protect important landscapes that support outdoor recreation, such as wildlife viewing and fishing, as well as sustain quality drinking water sources
- Identify areas most appropriate for commercial and residential development
- Enhance the economic vitality of the overall community as a place to live, work, and play

A Greenprint is NOT:

- A map of land use prohibitions
- Determined from a single perspective
- Limited only to protecting biodiversity
- For condemning or taking land

## ON THE MINDS OF PENOBSCOT VALLEY RESIDENTS

During interviews conducted in May and June 2008, Penobscot Valley residents expressed concerns that development was exceeding the ability of their communities to fully consider and evaluate its effect on:

- Energy costs
- Economic development
- Fiscal health of municipalities
- Environmental sustainability and water quality
- Health care costs and fitness

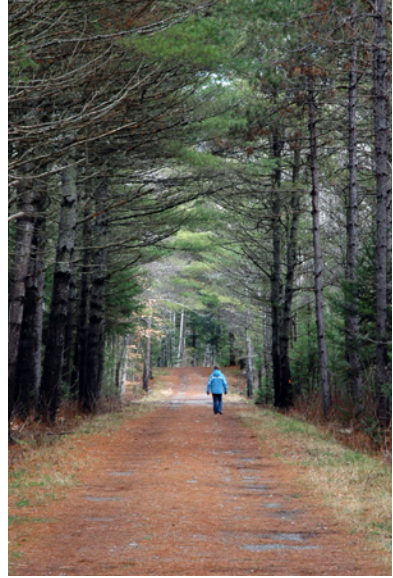
One respondent summed it up this way: “Health care costs are going to be a tremendous issue...and to have a system of open land that can encourage recreation and access for walking or biking to work, or easy access for children to a relatively safe path, should be a priority.”



## REGIONAL COLLABORATION

In 2007 City of Bangor leaders recognized the need for a new open space plan as part of an overall vision for its future, but they also understood that they would need to cooperate with other communities within the region to balance development and economic growth with comprehensive natural resource protection. Twelve member communities—Bangor, Bradley, Brewer, Eddington, Hampden, Hermon, Holden, Milford, Old Town, Orono, Orrington, and Veazie—joined together in an unprecedented effort to identify the most important qualities of the Penobscot Valley that must be preserved for a sustainable and vibrant future.

A partnership among The Trust for Public Land, the Bangor Land Trust, and the Penobscot Valley Council of Governments spearheaded a region-wide comprehensive open space-visioning project known as “Greenprinting.” This effort’s goals were established through one-on-one interviews, extensive research and analyses, public listening sessions, public opinion surveys, and broad community guidance.



“ THE QUALITY OF LIFE HAS TO DO WITH THE COMMUNITY—LARGE ENOUGH TO GIVE YOU WHAT YOU NEED, BUT SMALL ENOUGH THAT NINE PEOPLE IN A ROOM CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. ”

—CARY WESTIN,  
BANGOR RESIDENT



# FROM VISION TO ON-THE-GROUND REALITY

The many local residents, agencies, and organizations that participated in the Penobscot Valley Community Greenprint view it as a “blueprint” for continued regional collaboration to preserve the area as a great place to live, work, and play. They recommended a series of specific action steps to turn the Greenprint vision into on-the-ground reality.



**Action Item 1.** Use Greenprint maps to pursue conservation of identified lands.

**Action Item 2.** Bring together the 12 municipalities that worked on this project for problem solving around economic development, transportation, demographics, and environmental issues.

**Action Item 3.** Foster better cooperation among all recreational users to help address conflicts on and stewardship of conservation lands.

**Action Item 4.** Increase the number of maps and wayfinding signage for existing trails and incorporate into new ones as they are developed.

**Action Item 5.** Permit site-appropriate development that will contribute to the public appreciation of the Penobscot River.

**Action Item 6.** Enhance local farming/food production incentives.

“ THIS [GREENPRINT] FOSTERS A NEW FOUND SPIRIT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN COMMUNITIES WHOSE BORDERS FALL AWAY WHILE WE WORK TOGETHER TOWARD COMMON GOALS OF CONSERVING AND MAINTAINING THE BEAUTY OF OUR PENOBSCOT VALLEY. ”

—ELLEN CAMPBELL,  
DIRECTOR, HOLDEN LAND TRUST





“MANY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED ON THE GREENPRINT WILL CONTINUE WITH CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS. WE ALL HAVE SIMILAR ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS AND NOW HAVE THE RESOURCES, WHEN COMBINED TOGETHER, TO MAKE REAL CHANGES HAPPEN.”

—LINDA JOHNS,  
BREWER CITY PLANNER

Conservation of those lands identified in the Greenprint maps is only one of the strategies recommended, and it will require stitching together a “funding quilt” of local, state, federal, and private dollars to achieve this primary goal. The Greenprint maps and web-based tools will be housed, maintained, and updated through the Penobscot Valley Council of Governments and made available to all of the member communities. You can also view them by visiting [www.tpl.org/maine](http://www.tpl.org/maine).

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FARTHEST LEFT: A family enjoys hiking in Bangor, ME; Far left, TOP: Walking Sewell Road in Old Town, ME. PHOTOS BY JEFF KIRLIN; FAR LEFT, BOTTOM: The Old Town Dam. PHOTO BY ÁSGEIR J. WHITNEY; LEFT: Lakeside on a fall day in the Penobscot Valley. PHOTOS BY JEFF KIRLIN; ABOVE: The setting moon along Stillwater River in Old Town. BACK: Sunrise in a field in the Penobscot Valley. PHOTOS BY ÁSGEIR J. WHITNEY.

The Trust for Public Land, the Bangor Land Trust, and the Penobscot Valley Council of Governments gratefully acknowledge the individuals and organizations that have contributed their time, energy, and ideas toward the creation of the Penobscot Valley Community Greenprint. Plans are only as strong as the vision of the people who created them and those who will carry them forward to implementation. You can help by:

- Telling us about land that should and could be protected
- Sharing this publication with your friends and neighbors
  - Supporting the work of the convening organizations
- Learning more about this initiative and assisting with one or more of the action steps described above. Begin by viewing the full report on-line at [www.tpl.org/maine](http://www.tpl.org/maine) then follow up with your community representatives or the convening organizations.

*To learn more, contact:*  
The Trust for Public Land  
Maine State Office  
377 Fore Street, 3rd Floor  
Portland, Maine 04101  
207.772.7424  
[tpl.org](http://tpl.org)



Since 1972, The Trust for Public Land, a national non-profit organization, has conserved land for people to enjoy as parks, community gardens, historic sites, rural lands, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. TPL opened its Maine State Office in 1993, and has saved almost 140,000 acres across the state.



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Penobscot Valley Community Greenprint Project Team  
National Project Manager - Kelley Hart • Maine Project Manager - Jim Gooch  
GIS Developer - Brenda Faber • Design - [ravenandcrowstudio.com](http://ravenandcrowstudio.com) • Copy - Amy Condon



# Penobscot Valley Community Greenprint Overall Regional Priorities



**Legend**

**Overall Regional Priorities**

- High
- Moderate - High
- Moderate
- Parks and Conservation Land\*

**Transportation**

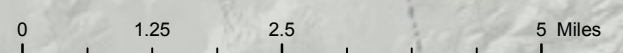
- Interstate
- Principal arterial
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Railroad

**Water Features**

- Waterbody
- River
- Major Wetlands

Urban Boundary  
Township Boundary  
County Boundary

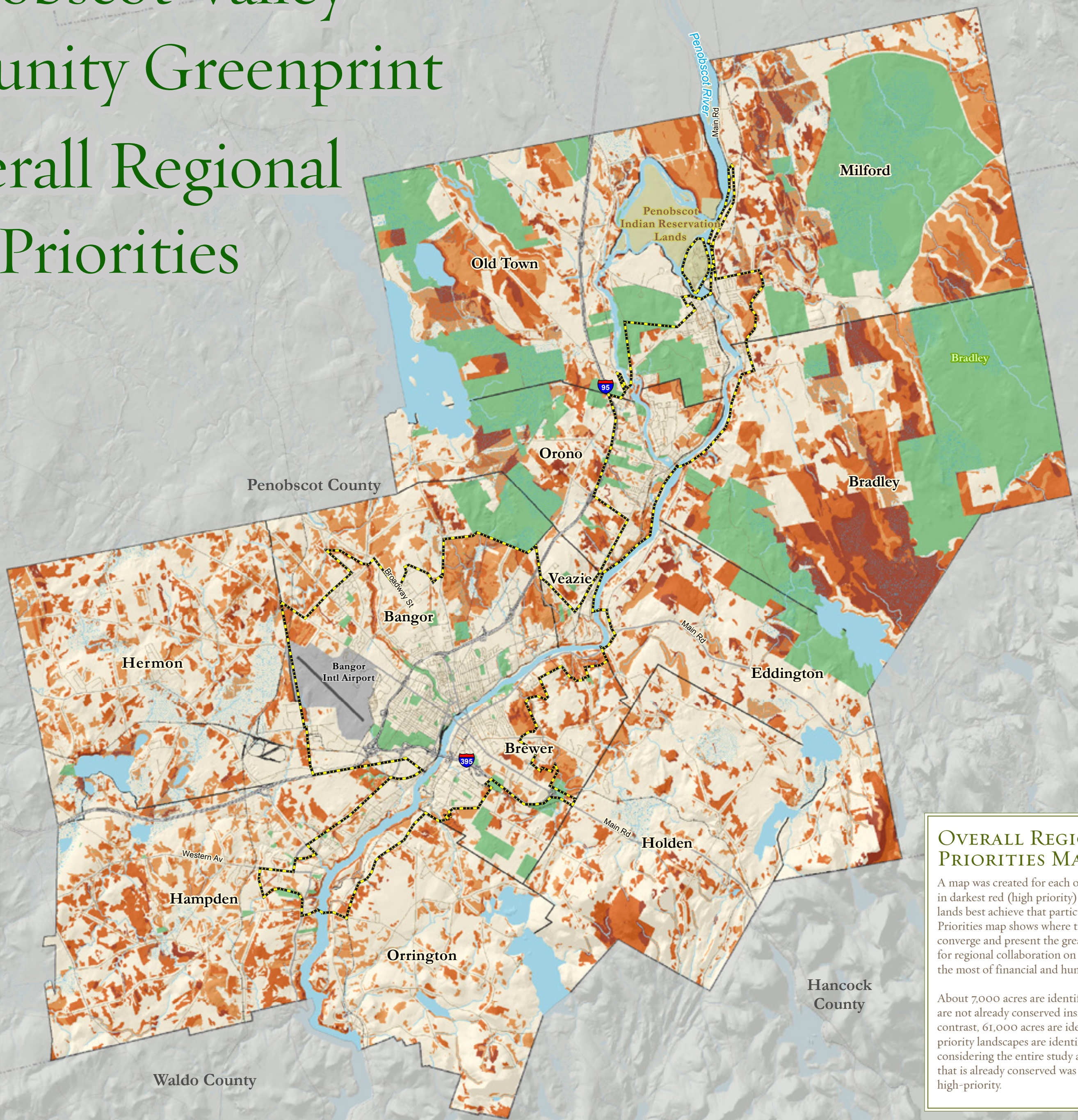
\* Conservation Land includes areas managed by federal and state agencies, land trusts, municipal greenspaces and the University of Maine preservation lands.



This map displays the Overall Regional Priorities results for the Penobscot Valley Community Greenprint. These results reflect priorities for urban and rural areas by assigning unique relative weights to urban priorities inside the Urban Boundary and rural priorities outside the Urban Boundary. The degree of priority for each area is shown with a color scale with dark red representing high priority and orange representing moderate priority.

These priorities are the result of a weighted analysis on the following criteria:

	Urban	Rural
Protect Habitat and Unfragmented Natural Areas	19 %	28 %
Maintain Scenic Values and Protect Scenic Vistas	2 %	18 %
Protect Working Landscapes	9 %	26 %
Protect Water Quality	18 %	10 %
Establish Areas for Public Access and Recreation	27 %	14 %
Create Trails	25 %	15 %



## OVERALL REGIONAL PRIORITIES MAP

A map was created for each of the Greenprint goals, showing in darkest red (high priority) to yellow (low priority) which lands best achieve that particular goal. The Overall Regional Priorities map shows where the multiple Greenprint goals converge and present the greatest opportunities, not mandates, for regional collaboration on land conservation while making the most of financial and human resources.

About 7,000 acres are identified as opportunity lands that are not already conserved inside the urban growth areas. In contrast, 61,000 acres are identified in rural areas. Significant priority landscapes are identified in all 12 municipalities. When considering the entire study area, about 75 percent of the land that is already conserved was identified by the Greenprint as high-priority.

Map created by the Trust for Public Land on April 18, 2009. Created in ArcMap 9.3.0. Map Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 19N; TPL, The Trust for Public Land, and The Trust for Public Land logo are trademarks of The Trust for Public Land. Copyright © 2009 The Trust for Public Land. www.tpl.org. Information on this map is provided for purposes of discussion and visualization only.

### A REGIONAL VISION

The Greenprint process is based on a set of goals or priorities developed by representatives of the respective communities and other participating stakeholders. For the Penobscot Valley, these are:

**GOAL: PROTECT HABITAT AND UNFRAGMENTED NATURAL AREAS**  
Large contiguous spaces, areas with habitat diversity and endangered species habitat, connectivity corridors, aquatic wildlife habitat, terrestrial wildlife habitat, and undeveloped buffers surrounding natural lands were identified.

**GOAL: MAINTAIN SCENIC VALUES AND PROTECT SCENIC VISTAS**  
Specific hills, ridges, high elevations with views of the Penobscot River and of open lands, farms, and water bodies were identified.

**GOAL: PROTECT WORKING LANDSCAPES**  
In an effort to support traditional economies, provide for local food production, and preserve the cultural heritage of the area, lands identified included working forests, existing farms and fields, and vacant lands with soil that supports farming.

**GOAL: PROTECT WATER QUALITY**  
Lands key to improving drinking water quality include riparian buffers, wetlands and shorelines, aquifer recharge and wellhead protection areas, high flood zones, and headwater buffers.

**GOAL: ESTABLISH AREAS FOR PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION**  
In the urban areas along the Penobscot, access to the river and pedestrian corridors was identified as a high priority. Gardens, neighborhood parks, and low-impact

recreation ranked high for growing suburban communities.

**GOAL: CREATE TRAILS**  
High priority lands were identified that connect destinations, such as river access points, town centers, parks, and historic districts, to existing trail systems. Connection opportunities include stream edges, bridges, areas targeted in corridor plans, the East Coast Greenway, utility and railroad corridors, low-traffic roads, and undeveloped lands.