Comprehensive Plan Committee

**Purpose**
The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of Lamoine’s agricultural and forest resources. Specifically, this section will:

a. Describe the extent of Lamoine’s farms and forest lands

b. predict whether the viability of these resources will be threatened by the impacts of growth and development, and

c. assess the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve farm and forest resources

**Agricultural Resources**

**Introduction**

This section will focus on the agricultural profile to demonstrate the economic, cultural, and resource stewardship value of agriculture in Lamoine. Agriculture is seen as a very important part of a diversity of livelihood and experience in a small town such as Lamoine. In Lamoine, there are not large scale farming operations due to lack of acreage, poorer soils, and geography. There are, however, many small scale farming operations in town.

There is consensus that there has been a trend of declining agricultural activities in Lamoine. At the same rate, there is a strong emphasis on continuing support and development of agriculture as very important to the town. Cited especially is the trend of demand for locally grown food, not only for Lamoiners, but for towns in the surrounding area. In addition, Lamoine could be an attractive location for families wanting to pursue farming.

Both the 1996 Lamoine Comprehensive Plan and the Open Space Report and Inventory, stress the importance of determining the potential for various options of land use, considering the stated goals of maintaining a balance between housing and other development, and the preservation of land for agriculture, forest, and recreational use. The state goal is, “To safeguard the State’s agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.”

The 2013 Open Space Report and Inventory addresses “The Forest Environment” specifically (p.5) and makes reference to the rural nature of much of Lamoine, along with mentions of agriculture (e.g., in the Large Habitat Blocks section: “Activity within those interior blocks can be extensive…. is often periodic forestry-related activity, with some agricultural activity in limited areas.” p.9)
Types of Farms
There are different types of farming operations in Lamoine. After interviewing different farmland owners in Lamoine, farms ranged from residents operating a farm in town, previously operating a farm in Lamoine, operating a small farm, residing in Lamoine, but operating a farm in another community, owning land farmed by others, and living on a farm which is no longer in active production. There are presently 436.6 acres in the farmland taxation classification and 93.9 acres in working or open farmland (9.5% of Lamoine’s 11,000 acres.) In Lamoine, there are a range of farming types such as: crops for livestock, a farm stand, a Community Support Agriculture farm; a goat farm; a horse farm, and a hay farm. Several areas of blueberry fields exist in town that are not being commercially harvested.

Future Needs for Agricultural Development

Many landowners and/or farmers cite a change in the nature of agriculture, with a trend toward smaller food production farms. The possibilities for Lamoine could include new ways of distributing farm products: farm stands, Lamoine farmer’s market, attracting residents in the surrounding areas, Ellsworth, Mt. Desert Island, Blue Hill, etc. to buy goods from Lamoine farms.

Some farmers have used state and local assistance programs for developing particular aspects of their farming (e.g. planning best areas for production, getting certified for certain activities, consultation on managing water and soil issues.)

Also stated by farmers, is the need for more tax incentives for livestock, land conservation in order grow agriculture products, and tax support for small agricultural business development. Crop diversification is dependent on consultation and financial assistance in soil analysis and development, especially for fruit and vegetable production.

Another possibility for agricultural growth is the encouragement for more community gardens, with the added asset of bringing the community together around local food security and sustainable food production closer to home. Other suggestions included: land owners renting out plots, or assigning a certain amount of their land to a community-run garden; centrally located gathering of home gardeners for swapping or selling their overflow of products (flowers, fruit, vegetables, herbs, etc.), small livestock raising for local consumption —chickens—including eggs, pigs, cattle, sheep and/or goats.

The following are seen as necessary for there to be development of small-scale agricultural diversity in Lamoine:

* Investment in promotion of locally grown products;
* Public space for farmers’ market, or for community sharing of garden products;
* Resources for soil control and improvement;
* Up-front technical and financial assistance for agricultural and livestock business development;
* Agricultural-friendly ordinances and zoning, especially for small backyard livestock farming and roadside markets;
* Support (financial and program-related) for part-time assistants and paid apprentice programs for peak season work times.
* To encourage farmers to use the Soil Productivity Index (SPI) to reduce the tax burden

**Forestry**

An aerial view of Lamoine provides the striking realization that around 85% of its landmass is forestland. Evergreens dominate almost half of forested acres, with the other half supporting mixed forests shared with some deciduous woods and forested wetlands. (Open Space Report, 2013).

The total number of acres registered in the State's Tree Growth program has not changed significantly in the last 10 years, with approximately 3% of the total forested land, 307.4 acres, registered in 2015. Lamoine records of 2015 show 9 registrations in this program. A total of 209 acres are also in conservation easements. Within that 141 acres are jointly enrolled in the Tree Growth program, leaving 68 acres listed solely in conservation easement status.

Timber harvesting in Lamoine varies from year to year but shows a slight decline in the past 10 years (Table ____) Looking at 5 year intervals, the average annual harvest from 2000 - 2004 was 294.4 acres, declining in the 2005-2009 period to 156.4 acres, and in 2010-14 to 145.6 acres.

**TABLE ____: Summary of Timber Harvest Lamoine -- 2001 - 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Selection harvest, acres</th>
<th>Shelterwood harvest, acres</th>
<th>Clearcut harvest, acres</th>
<th>Total Harvest, acres</th>
<th>Change of land use, acres</th>
<th>Number of active Notifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Future needs for Forestry

Balancing preservation and conservation, and maintaining the nature and beauty of Lamoine are constant priority goals stated by Lamoine residents throughout all studies and reports since the 1996 Comprehensive Plan. Lamoine’s 2011 Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, along with regulations for timber harvesting, and Gravel Ordinance includes specific regulations for removal of vegetation that will maintain the natural forest and woodland environment. An Open Space Report and Inventory was presented by the Lamoine Conservation Commission in 2013, identifying areas for the Town’s focus in this area.

The following are seen as necessary for the conscientious use, conservation, and preservation of Lamoine’s forest resource:

- Designation of conservation priorities and of areas consistent with those priorities
- Preserving forest lands for recreation and access
- Active encouragement of residents to put their property into conservation easements, tree growth and other programs
- Development of a community forest
- Development of a shore-to-shore trail for (all-season?) public recreational use
- Identify and develop means of protecting forest areas for deer wintering yards
- Encourage natural resource base businesses and services
- Encourage nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses

Need to know: For Lamoine -- # of acres and/or registrations in the Open Space program: working on getting this from the State.