

# RECOMMENDATIONS





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**1. A list of scenic areas has been developed, based upon a land-based evaluation of Islesboro, Vinalhaven, and North Haven Islands.**

The object of the study was to identify those places on the major islands of Penobscot Bay which exhibit greater than normal visual quality. During the course of the evaluation over one hundred potential scenic areas were identified, based upon a review of existing map data, using the criteria of landform, open land, shoreline configuration, special scenic features, and views to water. Following a series of field visits, which looked at landscape character, vegetation, and landscape composition, the list was narrowed to the 51 sites which are described in the report. Using the predetermined scoring system that was developed for the Scenic Inventory Mainland Sites of Penobscot Bay, each of the sites was assigned a score, based upon a hypothetical maximum of 100 points. The scores are considered a starting point in making a determination of relative importance for the Critical Areas Program.

**2. Approximately 19 of the site that were evaluated should be considered for inclusion in the Critical Areas Program, based upon their scenic quality.**

Sites that scored in excess of 70 points are of statewide significance and should be considered for inclusion on the roster of Critical Areas. The scores should only be considered a starting point in making a determination of relative importance for the Critical Areas Program. The areas that scored the highest (4 received a score greater than 80) are clearly of state-wide or greater significance. While many of these places are not as well know as those that received comparable scores on the mainland, they do represent some of the best of Maine's landscape.

**3. Additional field investigation is recommended for the second grouping of sites to determine if they warrant inclusion in the Critical Areas Program.**

The second grouping of places are of high scenic quality, but may not warrant the designation of a Critical Area. Each of the sites (28 received a score between 50 and 60) should be evaluated on an individual basis for a final determination.

**4. Additional field investigation is recommended to identify all sites of local significance.**

The areas that scored in the lowest range (4 received a score below 50) are generally of local significance, relative to other areas within the islands of Penobscot Bay. The rather small number of sites is more a function of the initial filtering process rather than the aesthetic characteristics of the site itself. Islesboro has already completed a rather extensive inventory of its scenic areas, which was of great value in the preparation of this report. In

the long term it would be short-sighted on the part of local communities and the state to take steps to protect only those sites which rose to the top of the list, while allowing adjacent areas to become degraded. The islands are recognized as places of great fragility. The places between the points of interest and scenic areas must be considered as no less important to the overall scenic beauty of the islands.

**5. Management strategies for preservation of scenic character are recommended for all scenic areas identified.**

In addition to describing and mapping each site, the report includes broad management recommendations to guide local and state officials with specific actions to preserve or improve the visual environment. A number of site-specific recommendations are offered that relate to additional parking, vegetation management to preserve open views, and provisions for public access. Several recommendations also address policy issues that can have a long-term influence on the preservation of scenic quality: incorporation of visual standards into the review process for subdivisions and other development projects; recommendations for conservation easements for particularly vulnerable parts of a viewshed; greater sensitivity on the part of DOT and others responsible for repair and replacement of the public infrastructure.

**6. The smaller islands of the Great Spruce Head Island archipelago need further assessment to characterize their visual qualities.**

This study concentrated on the major islands of Penobscot Bay: Islesboro, Vinalhaven, and North Haven. Great Spruce Head, Little Spruce Head, Butter, and Eagle Islands, as well as several smaller islands, form a distinctive land mass on the north side of North Haven Island. Additional data needs to be gathered on this islands as part of the Critical Areas Program's scenic inventory program.

**7. Additional field investigation will be needed to complete the inventory of scenic areas viewed from the water.**

A preliminary list of scenic areas seen from the water has been developed for the study area. A rating system was developed to make a preliminary determination of visual quality, based upon eight scenic indicators.

**8. The information contained in this report should be widely disseminated and used in both local, state-wide, and federal planning, design, and decision making.**

The information gathered as part of this inventory, as well as subsequent visual assessments in Maine, should be available for all public agencies and interest groups that deal with land use in Maine. These include:

- The Critical Areas Program of the State Planning Office.

- The National Park Service, which has already initiated scenic inventories of the lands visible from Acadia National Park.
- The State's Geographic Information System office, which is collecting, digitizing, and making available a wide array of natural resource data.
- The Maine Department of Environmental Protection, in evaluating the need for a Visual Impact Analysis for applications for Site Location of Development Permits. See Site Location of Development Law (38 MRSA Sec. 481 et. seq.) Chapter 375.14 No Unreasonable Effect on Scenic Character.
- The Land for Maine's Future Board, in evaluating parcels of land that may be nominated in the future for purchase and setting priorities for acquisition.
- The Maine Department of Transportation, in designating Scenic Highways, rest areas, and scenic turnouts, and making improvements to MeDOT infrastructure (e.g., ferry terminals and wharfs).
- Maine Tourism Council, in promoting the entire State of Maine
- The Maine Film Commission, in assisting movie producers in finding locations for feature films
- Local town officials, in evaluating the Viewshed Management Recommendations for specific actions to increase public access, both physical and visual.
- Local Planning Boards, in evaluating subdivisions and other development proposals that may have an impact on identified scenic areas.
- Local Comprehensive Planning Committees, in developing resource maps of their communities to show areas of visual sensitivity and ultimately coming up with long term plans for growth and rural areas.
- The Maine Coast Heritage Trust and Nature Conservancy, in formulating plans for acquisition and evaluating parcels of land.
- Local land trusts, in setting conservation priorities on the islands.
- The Maine Island Trails Association, in establishing a database of information on Maine's island resources for the use and enjoyment of all.

