

## **Rural Youth Futures: Youth Aspirations and Labor Market Perceptions in Rural Communities**

### **Progress update: June 19, 2018**

#### *Project Team:*

- Mindy Crandall, Jessica Leahy, Nicole Bernsen, School of Forest Resources, University of Maine
- Dawna Blackstone and Andy Muller, Appalachian Mountain Club
- Jesse Abrams and Cass Moseley, Ecosystem Workforce Project, University of Oregon
- Alexa Carelton, Coos Watershed Association
- Barb Baker and Sheila Norman, Cooperative Extension, University of Maine

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Grant time period: September 1, 2017 – August 31, 2020

#### **Research**

For the first and second quarters of 2018 (January – June), our focus was to implement the youth survey in schools in Piscataquis County, Maine, along with a school in Jackman (a community with ties to schools in Piscataquis County). Parental permission to participate in the survey was required.

- An additional one-year grant from the University of Maine Research Reinvestment Fund was awarded for an undergraduate research assistant.
- Angelina Buzzelli, a Marketing major in the Maine Business School and a graduate of a Piscataquis County High School, was hired for this role.
- IRB approval was granted for the survey with Steering Committee comments and suggestions incorporated.
- Dawna, Nicole, and Angelina worked together to contact officials at all schools involved to solicit their participation in the survey project and to discuss the distribution of permission letters.
- Second and third round of permission letters were printed and distributed to schools.
- Contact and social media channels were created for the project.
  - Phone: (207) 808-2140
  - E-mail: [um.ruralityouth@maine.edu](mailto:um.ruralityouth@maine.edu)
  - Facebook: [@ruralityouthfuturesproject](#)
  - Instagram: [@ruralityouthfutures](#)
- A [promotional video](#) was created and posted on the Facebook page.
- Angelina presented the project at a Foxcroft Academy assembly.
- Flyers were posted throughout Piscataquis County and Jackman informing people about the listening sessions and survey.
- Surveys were delivered electronically to schools and completed by 205 students.
- Listening sessions were held in Dover-Foxcroft on May 21, 2018 and in Greenville on May 22, 2018.
- The project team held monthly conference calls.

#### **Outreach**

- In conjunction with the Rural Aspirations Project, the University of Maine held a *Winter Summit* on January 11-12, 2018. The summit brought teachers to campus to investigate post-secondary and rural school landscapes in preparation for establishing a Maine Forest Collaborative.
- Collaborations were established with Helping Hands with Heart and the Piscataquis Chamber of Commerce.
- Angelina presented “Rural Youth Futures: Preliminary Research” at the annual University of Maine Student Research Symposium in Bangor, ME, April 17, 2018.
- The Rural Youth Aspirations Project and The University of Maine held a *Spring Summit* May 17-18, 2018. The summit brought teachers to campus to gain a deeper understanding of innovations within Maine’s natural resource economy and select a guiding question for the first year of the Maine Forest Collaborative.