

County of Waldo, Maine
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Written Testimony of Dale D. Rowley, Project Engineer, County of Waldo

To the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government on January 12 2022
An Act To Clarify the Boundary between Waldo County and Knox County in Penobscot Bay

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and members of the committee, my name is Dale Rowley and I am representing the County of Waldo. I am testifying in support of LD 1806.

In early January 2020, the County of Waldo received a letter from the U.S. Census Bureau to verify there were no geographic boundary issues with the boundaries of Waldo County. We responded that we felt there was a boundary issue. Following up to this response, the County Commissioners initiated an effort to further research the matter.

The Penobscot Bay Island of Laselle has been considered a part of Waldo County since 1827, when Waldo County was broken off from Hancock and Lincoln Counties. Yet modern maps always show Laselle Island south of the Waldo-Knox Boundary and located in Knox County (see Map 2021 ME North Haven West).

As all boundaries are political and the political body that determines political boundaries in Maine is the Maine State Legislature, we researched the legislative history relating to the Waldo boundaries.

On July 3, 1827, Waldo County was created by Public Law 1827 Chapter 354 enacted February 7, 1828. It contained all of what is now Waldo County, plus Camden, Hope, and Appleton.

The Legislature followed this act with Public Law 1828 Chapter 372 and enacted on January 22, 1828. This act clarified the boundary between Waldo County and Hancock County in Penobscot Bay.

On March 15, 1838, Public Law 1838 Chapter 451, An Act to Annex the Town of Vinalhaven in the County of Hancock to the County of Waldo was passed. Vinalhaven was now a part of Waldo County.

On June 30, 1846, Public Law 1846 Chapter 320, An Act to Incorporate the Town of Fox Island was passed. This set off the modern day Town of North Haven from the Town of Vinalhaven. At that time, both were still a part of Waldo County.

A map from 1859 of Waldo County represents the political boundaries as of 1859 and as had been enacted by statute. (See 1859 Map of Waldo).

On March 9, 1860, Public Law 1860 Chapter 146, An Act to Establish the County of Knox transferred the Towns of Appleton, Camden, Hope, North Haven and Vinalhaven to the County of Knox from the County of Waldo. This did not transfer any of the unorganized Islesboro archipelago islands to the County of Knox. This is evidenced by a map from 1884, which clearly shows the "archipelago" islands south of the Town of Islesboro as a part of the County of Waldo. It is also evidenced by a map from 1893 of Islesboro. (See 1884 Waldo County Atlas and 1893 Islesboro Archipelago Map).

We were unable to find any other statutes that transferred, annexed or further clarified the boundary between the County of Waldo and the County of Knox.

From here, we shall refer to a number of historical maps. It should be noted that maps are not legal documents that establish political boundaries, but graphic representations of what is the intent of the political authority, in this case the Maine State Legislature. Maps are evidence when backed up by statute.

A USGS 7.5 quad topographic map from 1904 shows Laselle Island and the other Islesboro archipelago islands within the boundary of the County of Waldo. This map represents the intent of the Legislature since 1860. (See 1904 ME Vinalhaven 62500).

For some unexplained reason, the USGS changed the boundary on the 1941 Vinalhaven Topographic Quad. A line of latitude was drawn between Lime Island and Laselle Island on the map. We have been unable to find any legal backing for this line. The adjacent topographic map, the 1941 Rockland Topographic Quad continues to show the Waldo-Knox Boundary as a north-west to south-east line. (See 1941 ME Vinalhaven 62500 and 1941 ME Rockland 62500).

Additionally, the 1944 Vinalhaven Topographic Quad returns the boundary to the loop around the Islesboro archipelago islands as has been shown historically and backed by statute. (See 1941 ME Vinalhaven 62500).

The 1948 USGS Bangor 1:250,000 topographic map continues to show the loop boundary around the Islesboro archipelago islands. (See 1948 ME Bangor 250000).

But then in 1956, the Bangor 1:250,000 topographic map returns the line of latitude that runs between Lime and Laselle islands. Again, there does not seem to be any legal justification for this line of latitude. (See 1956 ME Bangor 250000).

So this leaves us with a need for the Legislature to clarify the Waldo-Knox boundary in Penobscot Bay. (See map called WO Map Current Situation). The Orange boundary line is what is currently being displayed on maps, but there does not seem to be any statutory justification. The Blue line which shows Laselle Island in the County of Waldo is what is in effect regarding property taxes and deeds. (See document titled "1980_to_present_WO_Deeds"). The Purple line represents the historical boundary that does seem to be legally justified.

This now leads me to the proposal that the Commissioners of the County of Waldo wish to bring before the Legislative Joint Standing Committee for State and Local Government. (See Map titled Proposal for Waldo/Knox County Boundary). This proposal establishes the historical and legal boundary using Latitude and Longitude coordinates, so that there is no confusion for geographic information system specialists, nor the general public.

This map showing our proposal is a direct representation of the language in LD 1806 An Act to Clarify the Boundary between Waldo County and Knox County in Penobscot Bay.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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Note: I have a number of large map files that I either need to send or be able to share from my screen during the testimony.