Bates Mill historic district considered

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LEWISTON — State historic preservation officials will discuss placing the area around the Bates Mill on the National Register of Historic Places at a public hearing Oct. 7.

Christi Mitchell of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission said the proposed district would make developments there eligible for federal and state tax credits of about 50 percent.

The proposed district would include the canals and buildings between Lincoln and Canal streets and from Chestnut Street to the Bates Mill Building No. 5.

"All along, those mill buildings have been considered eligible for being included in a large historic district," Mitchell said. "The property owners for much of the complex approached us and said they'd be interested in using those tax credits to help pay for renovations."

Mitchell said the state was contacted specifically by Bates Mill LLC.

"The meeting is really designed for other property owners in that same area that might have as much information," Mitchell said. "But we are hoping that city officials and elected officials talk about the process and what it all means."

Mitchell said having the district declared historic would make property owners performing renovations eligible for 20 percent tax credits from the state and 25 to 30 percent from the federal government.

"In other words, if they do $1 million in rehab costs, they could get 45 to 50 percent of that back," she said.

The designation won't keep property owners from doing other projects, unless they get federal money, Mitchell said.

Mitchell said she expects the nomination will be filed with the state on Oct. 22, then forwarded to Washington, D.C., for final approval. A final decision is expected early next year.

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