



Recreation & Transportation Subcommittee

Meeting Agenda

Monday, June 12, 2023 – 2:30PM

Location: Remote via Zoom (pursuant to the Committee's adopted [Remote Meeting Policy](#))

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/86701370458?pwd=SlJmaGErTFp1eUVVK3BTSXh3VVpiUT09>

Meeting ID: 867 0137 0458

Passcode: 04543

1. Call to Order
2. Review of Draft 1: Recreation Topic Area
3. Committee/Public Comment
4. Set next meeting date (to review Transportation Topic Area in detail)
5. Adjournment

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Recreation

Overview

Damariscotta relies primarily on local non-profit organizations for much of its indoor and outdoor recreational amenities.

The Central Lincoln County YMCA offers indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, including basketball courts, a playground, fitness classes and more for the benefit of its members. The YMCA offers reduced-rate memberships at sliding scale for those who cannot otherwise afford the price of a full monthly membership. Private indoor and outdoor recreational spaces are found at the American Legion Hall, Lakehurst Hall and the Lincoln County Rifle Club. Damariscotta is also home to a plethora of artistic and cultural amenities, discussed in greater detail in the Arts & Culture area of this plan.

In addition, Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust maintains five trails and more than 300 acres of publicly accessible open space in Damariscotta. Regional opportunities exist for recreation in the surrounding Pemaquid peninsula towns thanks to the stewardship of Coastal Rivers as well, described in further detail below.

In terms of Town-owned recreational facilities, the boat launch at the downtown parking lot provides public access to the river and several informal boat launches at road bridges provide public access to the ponds. The Town also owns open space at the old town dump (now a capped landfill).

In general, important tracts of open space commonly used for recreation are publicly owned or otherwise conserved thanks to the stewardship of Coastal Rivers. What is missing from the community is active recreation infrastructure such as playgrounds, ball fields, basketball courts, pickleball courts, and similar that are open to all. As demographics in the community continue to shift younger (based on projections), this disparity in recreational amenities will become much more pronounced.

Recreation for All

As noted in the Population & Demographics section of this plan, approximately 26.4% of Damariscotta's population is between the ages of 25 and 44 (per American Community Survey data from 2020). Additionally, about 14.6% of Damariscotta's population is school-aged children between the ages of 5 and 14 years old. The average age of Damariscotta residents is 41.6, meaning that residents of the town are almost 10 years younger on average than the whole of Lincoln County, where the median age is 51.2. These demographic shifts are expected to continue according to population projections. As the demographics of the community change, the increase in adults of child-bearing age and the increase in school-aged children will result in increased demands for family-friendly planning.

Some critical components of family-friendly planning relevant to this section are the provision of accessible green spaces and recreation areas. Additionally, as children age, it is important to provide recreational opportunities. Currently, the YMCA has a playground and there are basketball courts at Great Salt Bay School, but the Town does not have a Parks & Recreation Department nor its own public playgrounds, ball fields, basketball courts, or other sporting facilities.

Near the outset of this planning process, 8th grade students at the Great Salt Bay Community School participated in the sixth year of "GSB Students Investigate" by writing news stories, some of which were published in the January 5, 2023 edition of the *Lincoln County News*. Two students focused their articles on the benefits of outdoor recreational areas to Damariscotta and its citizens. As was noted in student James Hanley's article, "There are basketball courts at the YMCA, but people who want to go play need a YMCA membership. Some people may not want to pay each month, but still want to play sports and be active. There is no alternative to the YMCA that doesn't cost money, and everyone wants a place to play and hang out, especially if they love being active."

Responses to the online survey put out as part of the Comprehensive Plan effort from more than **XX** individuals indicated that recreational amenities are **NOT AT ALL ADEQUATE/ADEQUATE/MORE THAN ADEQUATE** for their family's needs. Informal polls conducted by GSB student George Siegel for his article in the *Lincoln County News* found that, of 41 eighth-graders polled, about 75% of them would like to have an outdoor recreation area (namely a basketball court or other outdoor sporting facility) in Damariscotta.

Open Space & Continued Accessibility

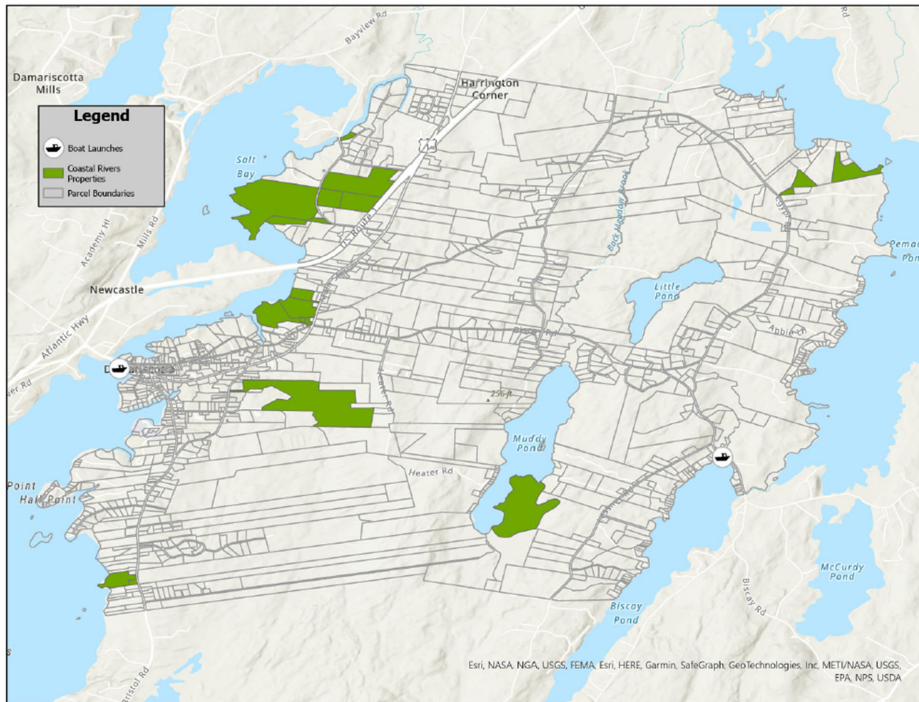
The Town relies primarily on Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, a local non-profit whose stated mission is to "care for the lands and waters of the Damariscotta-Pemaquid Region by conserving special places, protecting water quality, creating trails and public access, and deepening connections to nature," to conserve land for open space and passive recreational use.

For the purposes of this plan, the term "**passive recreation**" means low-impact, non-motorized outdoor recreational activities or uses that do not require developed facilities and can be accommodated with minimal change to an area and its topography. Examples include but are not limited to walking or hiking, cross-country skiing, bird-watching, snowshoeing, hunting, fishing, and other similar activities.

In the region, Coastal Rivers maintains more than 30 trails totaling more than 51 miles (and counting!). Five of these trails are in Damariscotta specifically. All of Coastal Rivers' trailheads in Damariscotta are kept plowed throughout the winter for year-round access. One trail in Damariscotta, the Rhoda and Leon Cohen River Trail, which connects Round Top Farm to Whaleback Shell Midden State Historic Site is specifically designed for accessibility. The trail is 8' wide with very little slope and a firm, smooth surface. Either trailhead is accessible for vans.

The Town does not currently have a mechanism (such as an open space fund or similar) to conserve land. In general, the community relies on Coastal Rivers to permanently conserve

open space that is of high recreational or ecological value to the community and occasionally appropriates funds to Coastal Rivers through the annual budget process (however, this has not occurred since 2020). Within the Damariscotta-Pemaquid Region, Coastal Rivers owns 60 properties, holds 58 conservation easements, and co-manages an additional 11 properties, which together total nearly 4,000 acres. For properties in Damariscotta specifically, see the map below.



Data Sources: Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust, Town Tax Records

The Town does own and maintain a limited strip of land near the downtown parking lot used as a waterfront park along the edge of the Damariscotta River. There is year-round parking available in the downtown parking lot, as well as a public kayak storage rack and restrooms available in the summer. In this area is also the Town boat launch, which is also able to be accessed by the public along with parking spots set aside for boat launch users.

Access to Water Bodies

Water bodies in Damariscotta include the Damariscotta River and Great Salt Bay, Muddy/Paradise Pond, Little Pond, Pemaquid Pond, and Biscay Pond. Preserves maintained by Coastal Rivers allow passive outdoor recreation alongside Great Salt Bay (accessed via Salt Bay Farm), the Damariscotta River (accessed via either Round Top Farm or Huston Landing), and Pemaquid Pond (accessed via Doyle Preserve). Trails allow pedestrians direct access to

the water. Doyle Preserve has canoe and kayak access. In addition, the Town puts out a canoe/kayak rack near the town landing that is available to the public during the spring and summer months for storage and easy access to the Damariscotta River.

Waterbodies without easy public access are Muddy/Paradise Pond and Biscay Pond. An unmaintained boat launch facility is located at the northernmost end of Biscay Pond (off Biscay Road) but this site is very shallow with a sand bottom, which limits the size of watercraft that can easily be launched. Muddy/Paradise Pond has no public access. A portion of the southern end is owned by Coastal Rivers, but no trails or access is available through that property.

Little Pond also has limited public access, except for a public access foot trail to the water through an easement from the property owner (the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District) with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife. However, limiting public access to Little Pond is by design since it is the Town's water supply. In order to protect the water supply, no motor craft of any kind, including boats and snowmobiles, are allowed on Little Pond. Ice fishing, swimming and live bait are also banned. However, fishermen are allowed to use the foot trail and to store canoes on the property, per the easement terms, which also protects the water supply by encouraging users not to use the canoes on other ponds and potentially bring back invasive species. Fishermen are also asked to register their canoes with the Great Salt Bay Sanitary District.

Threats to Accessing Recreational Lands

Perhaps the largest threat that may impede traditional access to private lands in the future is development and a changing culture around public recreational access on private property.

Overarching Policies

State Goals

1. Maintain and upgrade existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.
2. Preserve open space for recreational goals as appropriate.
3. Seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.

Local Goals

- 1.

SMART Strategies

1. Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. Assign a committee or community official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan.
2. Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for both motorized and non-motorized uses.

Commented [1]: There are local stakeholders who could contribute to this conversation greatly. Jonathan Eaton comes to mind (chair of planning board and avid hunter)

Commented [2R1]: He might also know about ATV trails which was a question that the subcommittee had

3. Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.
4. Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners of allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum, this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14 M.R.S.A. 159-A.
5. Provide educational materials to private property owners about the [Land for Maine's Future Program](#) in order to encourage continued public access to our woods and waters.
6. Work with the Town of Newcastle to create a downtown park, with maintenance shared by the two communities, in order to create an open and attractive space for residents of the two communities to gather and hold performances.

Commented [3]: At this point, this is simply a placeholder with the State's and my own recommendations/notes. We will discuss local policies, goals and strategies following the conclusion of public engagement events to ensure that public input is included

REQUIRED ANALYSES
Recreation Questions for the Comprehensive Plan

A. State Goal - *To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.*

B. Analyses - To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 3.9(C) to answer the following questions.

(1) Will existing recreational facilities and programs in the community and region accommodate projected growth or changes in age groups in your community?

See RALA and coordinate with population subcommittee.

Gather info from community re: surveys and community information gathering sessions.

(2) Is there a need for certain types of services or facilities or to upgrade or enlarge present facilities to either add capacity or make them more usable?

Bob suggests a town rec committee. Do we need that given how recreation services have evolved over time in town?

Short of that, what else needs upgrading, increased capacity, increased accessibility?

(3) Are important tracts of open space commonly used for recreation publicly-owned or otherwise permanently conserved?

We rely on Coastal Rivers for much of the open space in town.

Waterfront park

Potential park behind Bangor Savings

(4) Does the community have a mechanism, such as an open space fund or partnership with a land trust, to acquire important open spaces and access sites, either outright or through conservation easements?

Is our relationship with Coastal Rivers formal in any way?

(5) Does the public have access to each of the community's significant water bodies?

Yes, but is it adequate.

(6) Are recreational trails in the community adequately maintained? Are there use conflicts on these trails?

Let's investigate

(7) Is traditional access to private lands being restricted?

???

C. Condition and Trends - Minimum data required to address Analyses:

OVERVIEW from CP Vol 2 pg 109

Public recreation, cultural and artistic facilities in the village include Skidompha Library, the harbor parking lot shoreline grassy promenade and benches including the State boat launch ramp, the town dock and watercraft mooring field in the harbor. Private recreational facilities include Lincoln Theatre. Outside the village, public and non-profit facilities are concentrated at GSB School and Central Lincoln County (CLC) YMCA including ball fields, gymnasiums, meeting rooms for yoga, arts and crafts and the like and a future planned swimming pool. Non-profit recreation/artistic venues include the American Legion Hall next to the YMCA with indoor spaces for pool, card games and the like. On Route One near the Nobleboro line, the River Arts Gallery is the premier example of a venue for exhibiting graphic arts pieces as well as providing arts lessons and holding gallery showings of local artists.

(1) The community's **Comprehensive Planning Recreation Data Set** prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Conservation, and the Office, or their designees.

Our data set is the Rural Active Living Assessment data.

(2) **A description of:**

a. Important public and private active recreation programs

CP Vol 1 pg 71: Lincoln County YMCA and the GSB School offer indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. The Town boat launch at the Harbor parking lot provides public access to the river and several informal boat launches at road bridges provide public access to the lakes. Private indoor and outdoor recreational spaces are found at the Legion Hall, Lakehurst Hall and the Lincoln County Gun Club.

- b. Land and water recreation areas (including hunting and fishing areas) and facilities in the community and region, including regional recreational opportunities as appropriate

CP Vol 1pg 71: A brownfields study and possible follow-up remediation at the former town dump at the junction of Biscay and Standpipe Roads could provide public land for future town ball fields, play courts, batting and golf cages and the like.

- c. Identification of unmet needs.

CP Vol 1pg 71: Upgraded passive outdoor recreational amenities, such as pedestrian ways, renovated benches or boardwalk, could be considered as part of a harbor waterfront renovation project.

(3) An inventory of ***any fresh or saltwater bodies*** in the community determined locally to have **inadequate public access**.

- a. Damariscotta River/Great Salt Bay
- b. Muddy/Paradise Pond
- c. Little Pond
- d. Pemaquid Pond
- e. Biscay Pond

(4) A description of local and regional trail systems, trail management organizations, and conservation organizations that provide trails for all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiling, skiing, mountain biking, or hiking.

Who knows about trails above and beyond Coastal Rivers? Snowmobile and ATV?

(5) A map or list of important publicly-used open spaces and their associated facilities, such as parking and toilet facilities.

CP Vol 2 pg 109:

Table 1: Open Spaces, Damariscotta, 2014

Town Open Spaces

- o Great Salt Bay Community School
- o Old Town Dump (Intersection of Biscay an Standpipe Roads)

- o Biscay Beach – Biscay Pond
- o Fire Station - Town Garage
- o Town Hall

State Open Space

- o Me. IF&WL land – At Route One Bridge and Great Salt Bay
- o State Shell Midden Park

Public Utility Open Space

- o Great Salt Bay Sanitary District (GSBSD) water supply protection land around Little Pond
- o GSBSD land around Office and Treatment Lagoons

Non- Profit Open Space

- o Damariscotta River Association (DRA) land at DRA Farm on Great Salt Bay
- o DRA land at RoundTop Farm Cultural/Artistic/Recreational/Scientific/Educational Site
- o DRA passive open space on Damariscotta Rive and Paradise Pond.
- o PWA (Pemaquid Watershed association) passive open space on Pemaquid Pond

D. Policies - Minimum policies required to address state goals:

(1) To maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.

GOAL from CP Vol 1 pg 18: Over time, complete the 2008 Master Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan where appropriate and necessary.

(2) To preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.

GOAL from CP Vol 1 pg 18: Create public access to open space in town for passive recreation.

(3) To seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.

GOAL from CP Vol 1 pg 18: Provide adequate public access to the river and ponds in town along with associated parking.

E. Strategies - Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. Assign a committee or community official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan.
- (2) Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.
- (3) Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.
- (4) Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A.

STRATEGIES from CP Vol 1 pg 18:

1. Pursue grants and other funding for Brownfields assessments of the old town dump and municipal parking lot. Purpose: remediation needs to enable future redevelopment and recreational uses.
2. After Brownfields assessment, pursue funding for any required mitigation measures.
3. Cooperate with DRA in pursuing design, engineering, and funding for its Riverwalk.
4. After Brownfields assessment and any resulting required mitigation measures at the former town dump, pursue funding to create and maintain any public outdoor recreational facilities.
5. Discover additional passive recreational uses of DRA, PWA, GSB School, and YMCA land.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

from CP Vol 1 pg 48

AREA: STRATEGY: Pursue grants and other funding for Brownfields assessments of the old town dump and harbor parking lot for remediation needs to enable future redevelopment and recreational uses.

IMPLEMENTATION POLICY:

- An ad hoc committee will oversee results of the Coastal Communities Grant (2014) on the study of Main Street buildings facing the harbor parking lot with respect to sea-level and storm surge flood damage.
- Brownfields study of harbor parking lot and former town dump.
- Invite DRA to meet with waterfront committee on designing a riverwalk.
- After Brownfields assessment, pursue funding for any required mitigation measures.
- Cooperate with the DRA in pursuing design, engineering, and funding for its Riverwalk from DRA at Great Salt Bay to the Waterfront Park.
- After Brownfields assessment and any resulting required mitigation measures at the former town dump, pursue funding to create and maintain the public outdoor recreational facilities.
- Discover additional passive recreational uses of DRA, PWA, GSB School, and YMCA land.

PRIORITY/RESPONSIBILITY

- High and Constant (2014 – 2024)
- Funding: Town operating budget

Subdivision or other construction review ordinances might contain language indicating applicability and subdivision plan requirements similar to the following:

“Archaeological sites within or adjacent to the proposed subdivision which are either listed in or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or within or adjacent to an area designated as archaeologically sensitive or potentially containing such sites, as determined by the municipality or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. An appropriate archaeological survey shall be conducted .”

“If one or more National Register eligible or listed archaeological sites will suffer adverse impact, appropriate mitigation measures shall be proposed in the subdivision plan, and submitted for comment to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission at least 20 days prior to action being scheduled by the Planning Board.”

Contacts at MHPC

Prehistoric archaeology: Dr. Arthur Spiess, 287-2132 arthur.spiess@maine.gov

Historic archaeology: Leon Cranmer, 287-2132 leon.cranmer@maine.gov

I. RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

Public recreation, cultural and artistic facilities in the village include Skidompha Library, the harbor parking lot shoreline grassy promenade and benches including the State boat launch ramp, the town dock and watercraft mooring field in the harbor. Private recreational facilities include Lincoln Theatre. Outside the village, public and non-profit facilities are concentrated at GSB School and Central Lincoln County (CLC) YMCA including ball fields, gymnasiums, meeting rooms for yoga, arts and crafts and the like and a future planned swimming pool. Non-profit recreation/artistic venues include the American Legion Hall next to the YMCA with indoor spaces for pool, card games and the like. On Route One near the Nobleboro line, the River Arts Gallery is the premier example of a venue for exhibiting graphic arts pieces as well as providing arts lessons and holding gallery showings of local artists.

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- Town Hall

State Open Space

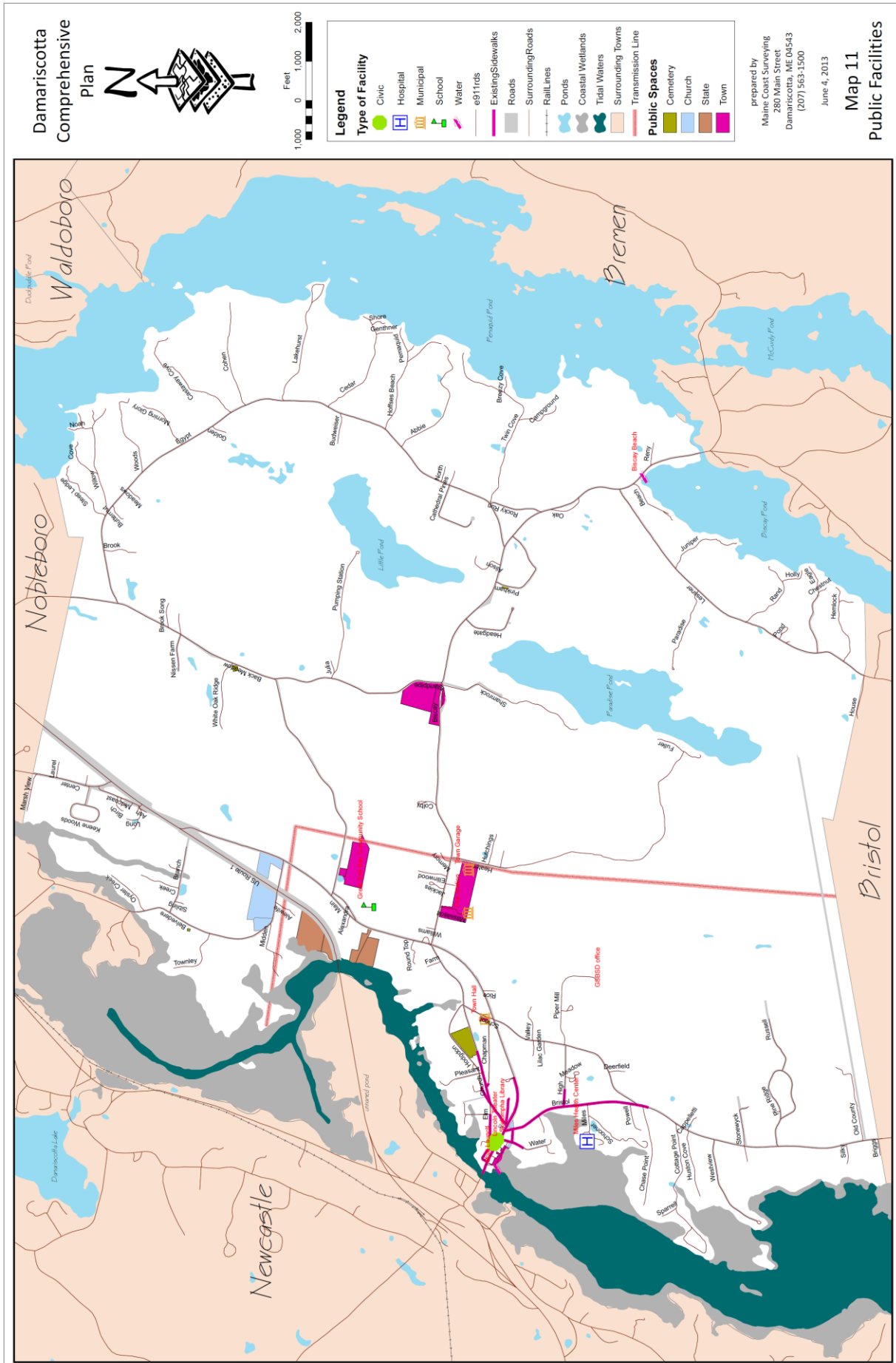
- Me. IF&WL land – At Route One Bridge and Great Salt Bay
- State Shell Midden Park

Public Utility Open Space

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- PWA (Pemaquid Watershed association) passive open space on Pemaquid Pond



9. Recreation**A. State Goal**

To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.

B. Analyses

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 3.9(C) to answer the following questions.

- (1) Will existing recreational facilities and programs in the community and region accommodate projected growth or changes in age groups in your community?
- (2) Is there a need for certain types of services or facilities or to upgrade or enlarge present facilities to either add capacity or make them more usable?
- (3) Are important tracts of open space commonly used for recreation publicly-owned or otherwise permanently conserved?
- (4) Does the community have a mechanism, such as an open space fund or partnership with a land trust, to acquire important open spaces and access sites, either outright or through conservation easements?
- (5) Does the public have access to each of the community's significant water bodies?

- (6) Are recreational trails in the community adequately maintained? Are there use conflicts on these trails?
- (7) Is traditional access to private lands being restricted?

C. Condition and Trends

Minimum data required to address Analyses:

- (1) The community's Comprehensive Planning Recreation Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Conservation, and the Office, or their designees.
- (2) A description of important public and private active recreation programs, land and water recreation areas (including hunting and fishing areas), and facilities in the community and region, including regional recreational opportunities as appropriate, and identification of unmet needs.
- (3) An inventory of any fresh or salt water bodies in the community determined locally to have inadequate public access.
- (4) A description of local and regional trail systems, trail management organizations, and conservation organizations that provide trails for all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiling, skiing, mountain biking, or hiking.
- (5) A map or list of important publicly-used open spaces and their associated facilities, such as parking and toilet facilities.

D. Policies

Minimum policies required to address state goals:

- (1) To maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.
- (2) To preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.
- (3) To seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.

E. Strategies

Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. Assign a committee or community official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan.

- (2) Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.
- (3) Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.
- (4) Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A.