

Recreation draft

VI. RECREATION

VI.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes recreational resources in Orland and assesses their current and future adequacy. It also assesses the availability of open space areas for public recreation and how public access could be threatened by future growth and development.

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

VI.2: SUMMARY OF 1998 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Orland has limited recreational facilities in town and relatively few organized youth and adult recreational programs. Parking is a problem at the various boat launching facilities. Orland's wealth of natural resources provides many additional recreational opportunities to residents. The town also participates in Bucksport's recreation program.

The town's protected open space is also limited. The only known preserved open space is owned by the Nature Conservancy along Toddy Pond. It will be difficult for the town to address these deficiencies given the many other demands on the tax base.

VI.3: KEY ISSUES AND FINDINGS IN 2017

The opening of the Orland Community Center has expanded recreational services. The lands protected by the Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust and USFWS assure access to hiking and other outdoor activities. Public access to surface water could be improved. There is no access at all to some ponds and parking is limited at other sites. Access to the Narramissic River has been improved with paved parking provided by the town in front of the Methodist Church on Narramissic Drive near a hand boat launch.

VI.4: CURRENT CONDITIONS

1. An Overview:

Recreation services are provided by the Orland Recreation Committee and the Bucksport YMCA (operated by Downeast Family YMCA in Ellsworth). These are supplemented by school-based programs provided by RSU 25. The Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery and Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust also offer facilities and programs. These are discussed below.

A. Public Recreation Facilities

The primary town-owned facility is the Orland Community and Fitness Center (formerly Orland Consolidated School) which encompasses about 13 acres. Facilities inside the Community Center include a gymnasium and a fitness center consisting of six rooms with free weights, weight machines and a full range of exercise equipment. These facilities are in very good to excellent condition.

Outside facilities include three ball fields, which accommodate baseball, softball and soccer. The fields are in fair condition. It is anticipated that the fields will need reconstruction and/or resurfacing in the near future. There is also a children's playground made possible by community fund raising efforts. The playground is in new condition. Additions to the playground are planned. The newest addition is a dog park. There are also horseshoe pits and outside volleyball and basketball courts and a pavilion.

The federally owned Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery offers a Visitor Center and amphitheater open to the public year-round with educational displays and salmon viewing. The conference room, amphitheater and Visitor Center are used by home-school groups, state and federal agencies and local nonprofits for meeting and event space. There are also picnic areas and boat launches on both Alamoosook Lake and Craig Pond, as well as several miles of nature trails.

Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust's (GPMCT) Wildlands property attracts thousands of visitors each year. The Wildlands encompasses 4,500 acres and provides low-impact recreational opportunities for individuals and groups as well as offering organized recreational activities. The Wildlands includes the popular Stuart Gross Trail up Great Pond Mountain.

There is a full access boat launch at Toddy Pond on Route 1. The parking lot may become congested or overflow during the summer tourist season or winter ice fishing events. Limited-access boat launch sites are located in the village on the Narramissic. These sites will only accommodate watercraft that can be launched by hand. See Table VI.1.

B. Activities

The Orland Community and Fitness Center basketball court (gymnasium) is used year round for a host of activities and functions. These include various cardio-fitness classes and workout programs such as Yoga, basketball, pickle ball, volleyball, and adult walking. There is also a spinning room for cycling classes. The Fitness Center's weight rooms and exercise equipment rooms are used by groups and individuals. Membership fees are charged.

During warmer weather there are multiple organized and unorganized groups using the outdoor facilities. Several schools use the grounds for soccer and cross-country meets. The Orland Recreation Committee sponsors soccer and, T-Ball, while the Adult Recreation sponsors "pickup" softball.

Orland River Day is a town celebration held each year on the last Saturday in June (rain or shine) - complete with a parade, food, crafts, environmental information booths, a "Downeast" raft race, the Alewife Run Paddle, and many other activities.

Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust (GPMCT) offers outdoor activities, such as hiking, bird watching, Christmas tree cutting, trail runs, campfire sing-a-longs and more in the Wildlands and/or at the fish hatchery for all ages.

C. Public Access to Surface Waters

Public access sites are summarized in Table VI.1. The Fish Hatchery's parking areas at both Alamoosook Lake and Craig Pond overflow on hot summer weekends, and are also busy during ice fishing season. There are erosion problems at the picnic areas at both sites, though a recent 319 grant has enabled the Fish Hatchery to work with Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation Service to repair some problem spots. There is no public access to Rocky and Patten Ponds. (For more information on the town's freshwater resources, see the *Water Resources* chapter.)

There are no state-owned public access points in Orland to the Orland and Narramissic Rivers. There is a public boat launch on Verona Island. Due to tidal currents, distance, and the lack of a portage site at the Orland Village Dam, the Verona Island launch site is of limited use for casual boaters from Orland. (For more information on access points to the two rivers, see the *Orland Village and Waterfront Plan*).

There are also some informal access points. One is a presently unmaintained portage site at the Alamoosook Lake dam. There also several places in the village area to put in a small craft. Some informal access sites may be restricted as ownership changes.

Water Body	Type of Facility	Description & Adequacy	Courtesy Boat Inspections
Alamoosook Lake	Trailer ramp, picnic area, restroom	On Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery property. Launch area has build-up of gravel, which limits its use by larger craft.	None
Craig Pond	Trailer ramp, picnic area, restroom	On Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery property, parking overflows during hot summer weekends	Weekends Memorial Day Thru Labor Day

Heart Pond	Hand-Carry	Owned by Maine DIF&W. Difficult access, little signage and trash problems.	None
Hothole Pond	Hand-carry access	Paddle access to Hothole Pond from roadside hand-carry launch on Moosehorn Stream on Bald Mtn. Road. Ease of access and erosion control problems.	None
Upper Patten Pond	No public access		None
Rocky Pond	No public access		None
Toddy Pond	Trailer ramp, picnic area, restroom, parking	Owned, maintained by State.	Weekends in June July-August 10am-4pm 5 days per week
Narramissic River	Hand-Carry	Sites across from the Orland Methodist Church, and next to the pumping station on Fish Point Road allow for hand-carry access	None
SOURCE: Orland Comprehensive Plan Committee			

D. Open Space

The major areas of preserved open space are listed in Table VI.2. The largest parcel is the 4,500-acre Great Pond Mountain Wildlands owned by Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust (GPMCT). The Trust maintains about 26 miles of trails, including the popular Stuart Gross Trail up Great Pond Mountain. Some are footpaths but most are open to multiple uses, including walking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, bicycling. Hunting and fishing is allowed. The Wildlands also includes two rustic campsites and picnic areas, and hosts public hikes and programs year-round. Scout troops, Trot Clubs, re-enactors, primitive skills groups and many more organizations use the land each year. GPMCT may continue to acquire Wildlands-adjacent lands suitable for recreation, wildlife habitat and sustainable timber harvest as they become available. GPMCT estimates that it has about 6,500 visitors a year to the Wildlands, not including the popular Stuart Gross Trail up Great Pond Mountain, which likely sees in excess of 20,000 visitors annually.

The Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery property, owned by US Fish & Wildlife Service, is 135 acres. The hatchery itself has about 5,000 visitors a year, not including the thousands of swimmers, hikers, picnickers and boaters using the beaches, trails and boat launches. GPMCT and USFWS properties combined account for about 16 percent of the town's total land area of 29,332 acres. This figure does not include other conserved lands such as boat launches at Toddy and Heart Ponds, and includes a 72 acre conservation easement held by GPMCT off the Mama Bear Road, which is privately owned (though not posted against hunting or hiking).

There are also places on private property that are used for hunting and fishing. There are no formal arrangements for access, and ownership could change. Out of respect for landowner privacy, this plan does not identify any such sites.

Table VI.2 Conserved Open Space, Orland		
Description	Acreage	Ownership
Great Pond Mountain Wildlands	4,500	Great Pond Mtn. Conservation Trust
Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery	135	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Conservation easement held by GPMCT	72	Private
Total Preserved Land (percent of total town land area of 29,335 acres)	4,707 acres (16 percent)	
SOURCE: Orland Comprehensive Plan Committee		

E. Recreational Trails

As mentioned above, there are trails on both GPMCT and Hatchery properties. These trails connect with ITS 107, part of the International Snowmobile Trail System (ITS). The Bucksport Family Snowmobile Club marks and maintains ITS 107 and other local trails in town, including those crossing ice on Alamoosook Lake and Craig Pond.

While Orland has a wealth of trails for a number of uses, it lacks public trails designed specifically for single track mountain biking and ATV riding. The nearest public places for these sports include the Kiske lot in Dedham for mountain biking, and the Sunrise Trail in Ellsworth for ATV's. Residents have also indicated they would like safer trails for walking and biking in the downtown

area. For more information on trails, see the Village and Waterfront Plan and the Transportation chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.

VI.5: CURRENT & FUTURE ADEQUACY

Recreational facilities and services face several challenges today. Though Orland is blessed with more public access to the outdoors than most towns, there are problems with overcrowding with the existing access points at the Hatchery property on Alamoosook Lake, at Craig Pond and also Toddy Pond off Rte 1.

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