

Chapter F

Recreation and Health

1. Purpose

A community's quality of life is an important factor for most people deciding on a place to live, and as such is often related to the growth and development of a town or area. This section contains an inventory of current recreation and health facilities and an analysis of how these may be affected by future change and growth. Specifically, this chapter:

- a) describes current health and recreational resources in Brooksville;
- b) assesses the current and future adequacy of these resources; and
- c) predicts whether the availability of open spaces for public access and recreation will be threatened by future growth and development.

2. Key Findings & Issues

The majority of Brooksville residents are highly satisfied with the range of outdoor recreational opportunities provided by the Holbrook Island Sanctuary and the several land trusts that have preserved natural areas and provided trails to access and enjoy them. Many residents express a wish for more locally organized recreational activities and facilities (tennis/pickleball courts, outdoor basketball facilities), and many express the wish that local roads were safer and more accommodating to pedestrians and bicycles. Many also thought that recreational activities and resources should be better advertised through maps or newsletters.

As regards access to local and regional health facilities, many residents express concern that the local hospital in Blue Hill is no longer providing common surgical procedures, necessitating longer trips to Ellsworth and Bangor. Older residents who don't drive, or are anticipating not being able to drive, expressed concern about transportation to sources of medical care. Many said they would use telemedicine if it were available, but expressed concern that their internet connection might not be good enough to accommodate bandwidth necessary for this service.

3. Key Findings & Issues from the 2006 Plan

Sixty-two percent of respondents in 2006 were satisfied with recreational facilities or found them adequate, with 50% rating them as good to excellent. Public comments also suggested the need for the formation of a recreation committee to address tourism, bicycle/pedestrian safety and arts opportunities in Brooksville.

4. 2018 Public Opinion Survey Results & Supplementary Survey Data

In 2018 public satisfaction for recreation decreased, with only 54% responding that recreation facilities were adequate or better. Furthermore, in 2018 only 35% responded that recreational

programs were adequate or better. A supplemental survey with a smaller sample size focusing on recreation and health was provided in late 2020 to increase understanding of this issue. In contrast to the 2018 survey, 85% of respondents in 2020 reported satisfaction with recreational programs in Brooksville. The reason for this change in satisfaction is possibly due to the fact that the supplementary survey clarified that open space recreation activities were to be included, along with more traditional community-based activities like the softball tournaments.

5. Current Recreation & Health Resources

Health Facilities:

Brooksville does not have a clinic, or the office of any doctor or dentist. The school does have a nurse. An emergency vaccination clinic was recently (2021) organized by the Town, but aside from that single experience, residents travel to Blue Hill, or further to visit health facilities (such as Stonington for dental care). Castine used to be a popular destination for general medical care: Brooksville residents were often born in the hospital there. A nursing home in Penobscot recently was closed down, so people seeking a nursing home frequently choose Deer Isle as the closest option. Hospitals that serve the area are listed in Table F-1, along with their travel distance in miles. Their distance in minutes varies with the season and the traffic. Information about emergency care is found in Chapter E, Public Facilities.

**Table F – 1
Health Facilities**

Health Facility	Location	Distance From Brooksville	Emergency Room/Medicine
Northern Light Blue Hill Memorial Hospital	Blue Hill	11	Yes
Northern Light Maine Coast Memorial Hospital	Ellsworth	27	Yes
Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center	Bangor	50	Yes
Saint Joseph Hospital	Bangor	50	Yes
MDI Hospital	Bar Harbor	42	Yes
<i>Source: MEGIS, Open-Street map</i>			

Recreation Resources & Facilities:

Recreational programs and facilities are listed on Table F – 2. (Map F-1 shows the approximate locations, keyed to the numbers on Table F-2). Organized recreation and cultural activities are centered at the school, community center, and town office with the local land trusts and nature preserves also providing nature based recreation and educational programming. Examples of organized programs include school based sports and cultural activities. The community center provides space for theatre and concerts, talent shows, dance recitals, yoga, cards, and other activities. All three spaces are available for rent for private functions as well.

Brooksville is also home to a thriving arts and culture scene. The school, library and community center provide ample cultural and educational programming for local adults and youth, along with the Reversing Falls Sanctuary, located in the former North Brooksville Methodist Church. This organization provides community engagement and interaction through arts, music, and ecological awareness. Along with these public organizations, there are many private businesses that support and engage in cultural activities as mentioned in the economy chapter.

Brooksville is blessed with abundant public access to the natural environment and shoreline. Holbrook Island Sanctuary and Wildlife Preserve, along with many of the land trust properties, regularly schedule ecologically themed educational programs and activities, as well as simply ensuring public access to nature. In addition to the programming offered by local organizations such as Friends of Holbrook Island, Bucks Harbor Yacht Club also provides summer sailing and tennis lessons to local youth enrolled in the Brooksville Elementary school, and a summer square dance.

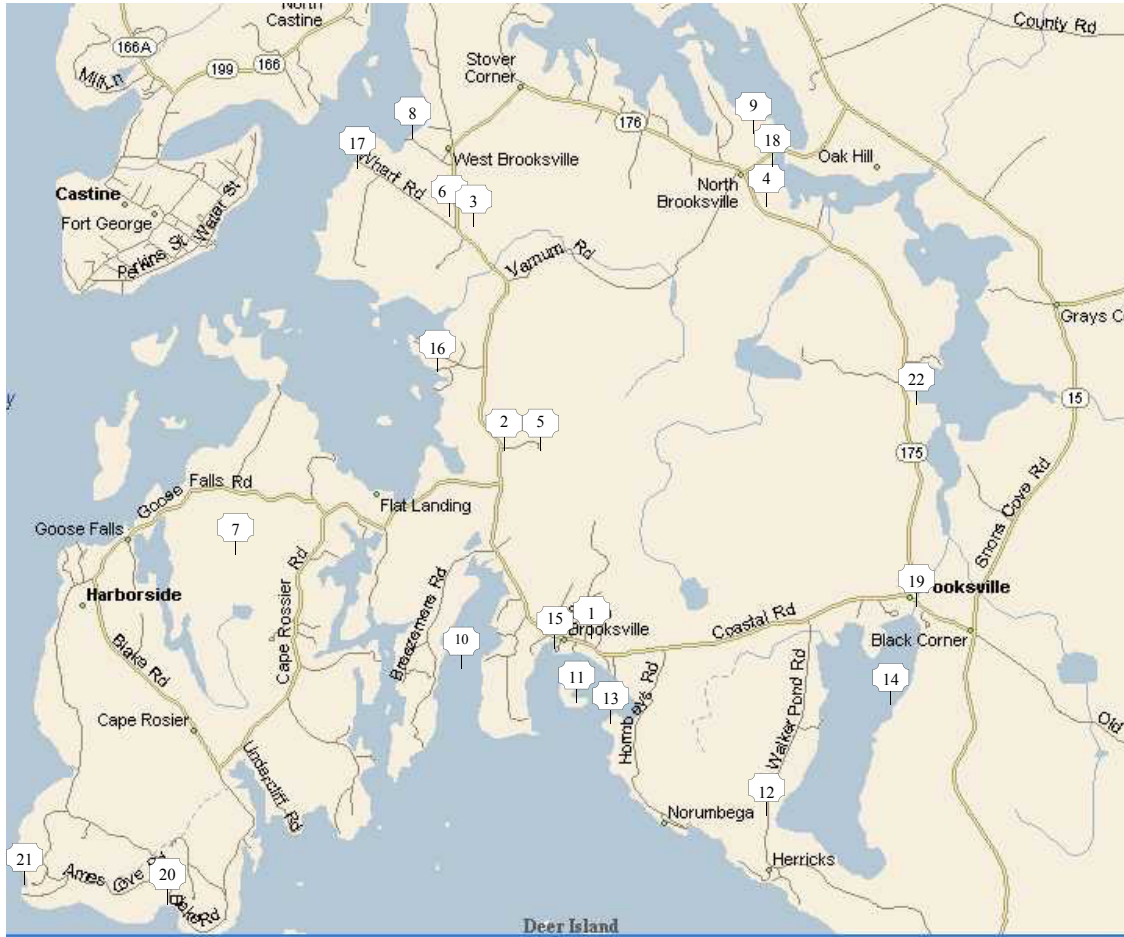
**Table F– 2
Recreation Resources & Facilities**

Facility	Size - Feet or Acreage	Owner / Condition	Activities
1. Community Center	~ 1000 sq. ft / 0.3 ac	Town / New Roof & Porch Upgrade in summer of 2021	Basketball, theatre, music, dance, yoga, craft fairs, receptions, and events
2. Public Service Building	~3985 sq. ft/ 0.6 ac	Town / Expansion Required	Library, conference rooms, public offices
3. Elementary School	1.2 acres	Town / New Roof & Septic Upgrade Required	Cultural, social, and sports events.
4. Reversing Falls Sanctuary	unknown	Private ownership / Good	Arts, theater, music and social awareness causes
5. Athletic Field	4 acres	Town / Good	Baseball diamond
6. Soccer Field	2 acres	Private ownership / Good	Soccer
7. Holbrook Island Sanctuary	1,343 acres	State / Good	Hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, picnic, boating, nature based educational programs.
8. Ferry Landing Natural Area	23 acres	Blue Hill Heritage Trust / Good	Kayaking, hiking, picnicking, bird watching
9. Snow Natural Area	40 acres	Blue Hill Heritage Trust / Good	Kayaking, hiking, picnicking, bird watching
10. John B. Mountain	38 acres	Blue Hill Heritage Trust / Good	Hiking, picnicking, bird watching
11. Harbor Island	unknown	Maine Coast Heritage Trust holds an easement upon a portion of private property / unknown	Picnic, kayaking
12. Lookout Rock Preserve	½ mi trail	Maine Coast Heritage Trust / Good	Picnicking, hiking
13. Pilot Point Preserve (water access ONLY)	9.2 acres	Maine Coast Heritage Trust / Good	Walking. Picnicking, small beach

Table continued on next page

Facility	Size - Feet or Acreage	Owner / Condition	Activities
14. Sedgwick – Brooksville Walker Pond town landing	unknown	Towns / Good	Boat Launch, floats, picnic tables, swimming beach, self-contained toilet
15. Betsy’s Cove Town Landing (Buck’s Harbor)	0.34 acres	Town / Expansion & Structural Reinforcement Required	Boat launch, floats, dinghy tie-ups, kayaking
16. Dodge’s Point Town Landing (Smith Cove)	0.35 acres	Town	Boat launch, floats, dinghy tie-ups, kayaking, picnic tables
17. South Wharf Road – Town Landing	4.5 acres	Town	Boat Launch, kayaking
18. Bagaduce Falls Town Landing (North Brooksville)	Less than one acre	Town	Boat launch, kayaking, picnic table/bench
19. Walker Pond Outlet (Bagaduce River Mill Pond)	1 developed acre, 30 wooded acres	Maine Coast Heritage Trust	Alewife fishing, picnic
20. Bakeman Beach	Less than one acre	Town	Boat launch, picnicking, kayaking
21. Ames Cove Beach (no parking, only Brooksville residents)	Less than one acre (right of way and beach only)	Point at Cape Rosier Homeowner’s Association	Nature appreciation, quiet picnicking
22. Bagaduce River Canoe Access	1 acre	Blue Hill Heritage Trust	Canoe portage access; birdwatching
<i>Source: CPC Guidance, Local Input, Town Records, Heritage Trust websites</i>			

Map F-1 Public Access Recreation Areas



Note: Many of the road names shown on this map are in error!

“Walker Pond Rd” = Herrick Rd

“Varnum Rd” = Varnumville Rd

“Goose Falls Rd” = Back Rd

“Blake Rd” = Cape Rosier Rd

“Wharf Rd” = South Wharf Rd

6. Adequacy of Brooksville’s Recreational & Health Resources

Adequacy of recreational resources is evaluated by means of State criteria that establish what resources a town of Brooksville’s size should have, supplemented by the subjective opinions of the residents themselves. The State standards are detailed in Table F – 3. As all towns are different, State standards are best considered as guidelines, and the local populace is the final judge of Brooksville’s recreational and health resource adequacy.

Brooksville benefits from strong regional cooperation in health and recreation. While the town does not have many local athletic facilities, nearby Blue Hill does have a recently opened indoor pool, recreation and athletic complex, the Lawrence Family Fitness Center, an indoor tennis club and other resources for recreation and culture.

7. Open Spaces

Inventory of Open Spaces:

Map F-1 shows where the recreational open spaces are located in Brooksville. It is important to note that this map shows only the publicly accessible open space. It does not include private property that is enrolled in the open space tax incentive program or under conservation easement. A tally and map of the acreage under those programs is found in Chapter J.

Potential Threats & Impacts to Open Spaces:

The previous comprehensive plan discussed the many outdoor spaces that were in private ownership and were frequently used for recreational activities. Since the 2006 plan was written an abundance of private land has been acquired by local land trusts and conservation organizations (see map in Chapter J). While this provides future protection for public access with regards to hiking, biking and cross-country skiing, hunting is still only permitted on private lands or where designated acceptable by the State. Changes in land ownership, whether for private use or development, could impact this important aspect of Maine life. Preserving access to what is considered “the commons” could be promoted through such means as conservation subdivision methods and development regulations.

It is also important to recognize that new Maine residents may be fearful of allowing traditional public access to their land, out of liability concerns. This fear results in posting “no trespassing” signs in areas where residents were previously free to wander. Maine has a somewhat unique set of laws, borne out of our hunting tradition, that basically say that a landowner does not have liability for injury that occurs on their property unless the landowner is charging a fee for use, or is willfully negligent in knowing about hazards and not removing them or marking them. There is a special duty of care owed to children. More attention should be paid to this subject and accurate guidance provided to new landowners in Brooksville.

**Table F – 3
State of Maine Guidelines for Parks and Recreation Services**

Activity or Facility		Population Criteria		Present in Brooksville?
I Administration		< 1000	> 1000	
	1. Parks & Recreation Committee	Y	Y	N
II Leadership				
	1. Summer Swimming Instructor	Y	Y	N
	2. Summer Recreation Director	Y	Y	N
III Public Programs				
	1. Swim Instruction	Y	Y	N
	2. Supervised Playground	Y	Y	N
	3. Senior Citizens Club	N	Y	N
	4. Skiing Instruction	N	Y	N
	5. Ice Skating	Y	Y	N
	6. Community-wide Events	Y	Y	Y
	7. Arts & Crafts Programing	N	Y	Y
	8. Evening Adult Education	N	Y	Y
IV Public Facilities (Including School)				
	A) Outdoor Facilities			
	1. Community Recreation Area: 12 – 25 acres	Y	Y	Y
	2. Softball/Little League Diamond	Y	Y	Y
	3. Basketball Court	Y	Y	Y
	4. Tennis Court	Y	Y	N
	5. Multi-purpose field	N	Y	Y
	6. Ice Skating	Y	Y	N
	7. Playgrounds	Y	Y	Y
	8. Horseshoe	N	Y	N
	9. Shuffleboard	N	Y	N
	10. Picnic Areas w/Tables etc.	Y	Y	Y
	B) Indoor Facilities			
	1. School Facilities Available to Public	Y	Y	Y
	2. Gym or Large Multipurpose Room	Y	Y	Y
	3. Auditorium	Y	Y	Y
	4. Public Library	Y	Y	Y
V. Finance				
	A) Minimum \$6.00 per capita for part-time programming	Y	Y	N
<i>Source: Recreation & Open Space Planning Workbook</i>				

8. Local and Regional Issues

The following issues were identified by the 2018 and 2020 surveys described in Section 4.

Local issues:

- Need for safe and comfortable pedestrian / bicycle access:
 - Local roads more suitable for biking and walking
 - Interconnected walking/biking trail network
- Improved basketball infrastructure - indoor & outdoor
- Improved recreational programming for senior citizens
- Improved access for all abilities in natural areas
- More information & better dissemination of information regarding programs, facilities, locations and schedules

Regional Issues:

Increased usage of regional recreational facilities will result in increased traffic problems and maintenance costs. Also, there is already too much litter being left in natural areas and public areas. This includes garbage and human waste, which are both health hazards. Controlling this problem presents additional costs to the municipalities that host such facilities, as well as to the private organizations that own them. It is very difficult to stay on top of this issue. Better signage with a phone number to call when a visitor notices a problem could possibly help, as could more waste receptacles and regular cleanout in areas where the problem cannot be resolved by “carry in/carry out” signage. For some areas, this includes “porta-potties.”

9. Goals & Objectives

GOAL: To provide a range of health and recreation activities to persons of all ages and abilities within the financial means of the town, and partner where appropriate with other organizations to meet current and future needs.			
Objective	Strategy	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
Improve access for all ages and abilities to various recreational facilities and resources.	Work with local land trusts, conservation groups and affiliated organization to identify and seek funding to support American With Disabilities Act (1990) design standards.	Select Board or designee(s)	Immediate and Ongoing
Monitor, change, update or improve recreational facilities and services based on changing needs and wishes of Brooksville residents.	Select Board will establish a Recreation committee.	Select Board	Immediate and ongoing
	Work with Maine Coast Heritage Trust and landowners to consider possible re-establishment of canoe/kayak access to the Bagaduce River near its headwaters at Walker Pond	Recreation committee	Within 5 years
Encourage and expand community gardening opportunities in Brooksville to address food insecurity and promote socialization and exercise.	Establish a garden and landscape committee, possibly as part of the Agriculture Committee (see Chapter J).	Select Board or their designee(s), USDA Cooperative Extension Service	Immediate
Improve access to health care facilities and appointments, through senior mobility/ride-share programs.	See Chapter D, Transportation.		
Improve access to telemedicine for residents.	See Chapter L, Broadband		
Improve access to age-in-place and home care services.	See Chapters B, C and D		