

Chapter 7

Recreation



Chapter 7

Recreation

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Bridgewater is within one of New England's most important recreation areas. Both local residents and tourists fish, boat, bike, picnic, skateboard, hunt, hike, snowmobile, ski, and pursue an array of other recreational activities in and around the Bridgewater area. More people are now participating in a wider range of activities than ever before.

To those Bridgewater citizens who spend time out-of-doors, recreation changes with the four seasons. Summer swimming and boating -- whether by motor craft or by canoe and kayak on both Newfound Lake and the Pemi River -- are followed by fall hikes and hunting. In winter downhill skiers go to nearby slopes. Meanwhile, crosscountry skiers share areas with snowmobiles, and fishermen cut into the ice and set up bobhouses against the cold. Spring features foot and bicycle hikes and running events along the trails and roads of town, and these events continue into summer.

Much of this activity is informally organized, if at all. Spontaneity characterizes many interests. But merchants and local groups organize foot races, local clubs sponsor snowmobile cavalcades and maintain the trails as well, and the Bristol Community Center runs programs on sports and crafts for Bridgewater youngsters in the summer.

2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

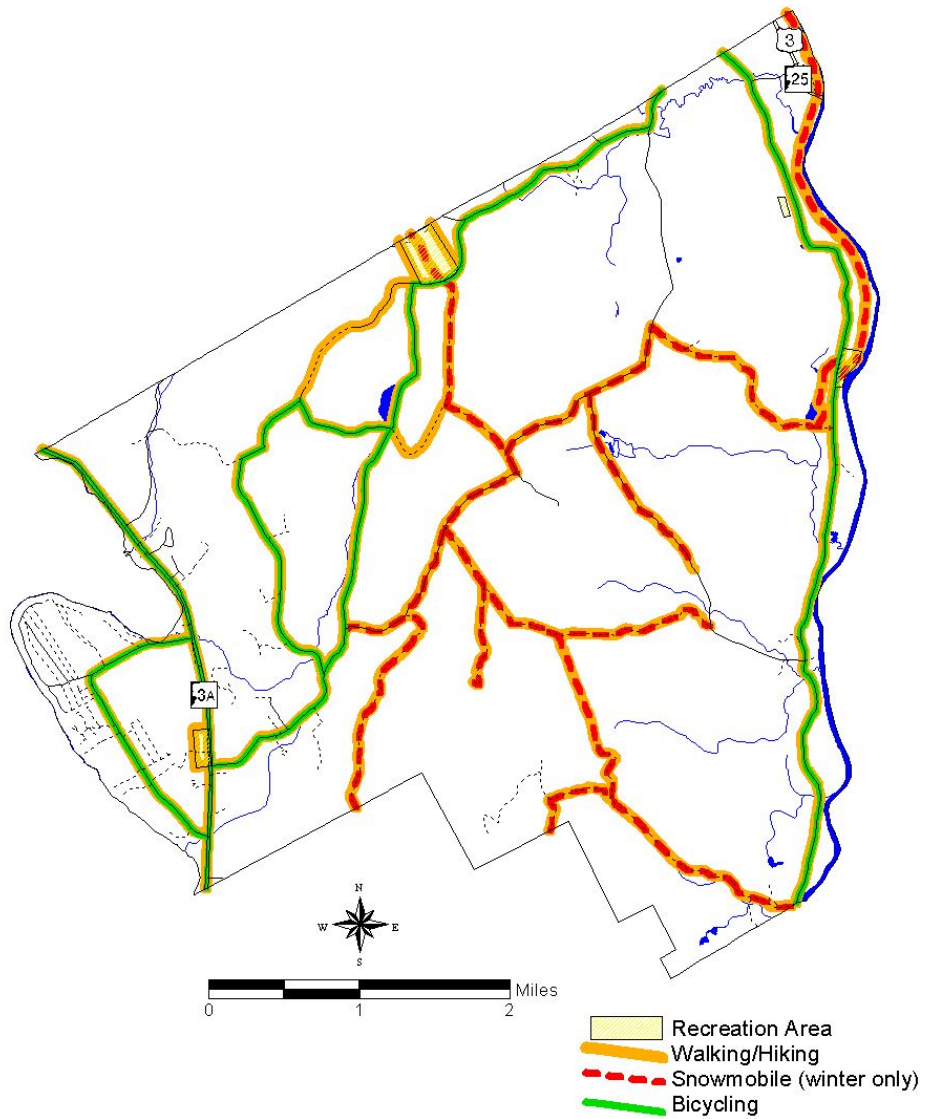
Several locations throughout Bridgewater offer recreational opportunities. Access to Newfound Lake is not one of those, except for landowners who abut the water or enjoy beach rights associated with their properties. To access Newfound Lake residents must go to Wellington State Park in Bristol, or Paradise Point Nature Center in Hebron.

Sites dedicated to recreation in Bridgewater include the new school on Route 3-A, the Town Forest on Dick Brown Road, and Sawhegenet Park off River Road along the Pemigewasset. The transportation system also provides a range of recreational opportunities for walking, running, bicycling, horseback riding, and many other activities. There is also network of groomed snowmobile trails within Bridgewater that connect to neighboring towns. The central portion of the community with its large unfragmented blocks of land, and its network or seasonal roads and



trails, has become a critical resource for many types of recreation. The following map identifies these and other areas that support recreational activities in Bridgewater.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



LAND USE IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY ACTIONS

Land Use Implications

Bridgewater's existing recreation resources provide area residents and visitors with exceptional opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and exercise. The community would like to encourage the acquisition and protection of additional land that is suitable for recreation to ensure that the growing and changing population continues to have adequate opportunities for recreation. Here are a few items to consider related to the recreation resources in Bridgewater.

- 1) Incorporating outdoor recreation more fully as a planning issue within larger discussions of land use and transportation related regulations and projects in Bridgewater will increase the benefits this amenity provides.
- 2) Planning for the implementation of an interconnected system of trails within a greenway of protected land will provide recreation, health and wellness, natural resource, transportation, and economic benefits that contribute to the overall "sense of place" in Bridgewater.

Potential Actions

There are an array of possible actions the Town may want to consider pursuing as it evaluates and improves the existing recreation resources in Bridgewater. This section will be used to identify the specific actions for Bridgewater to take upon completion of the master plan.

- 1) Create a Town Beach on Newfound Lake.
- 2) Continue to develop the Town Forest and Sawhegenet Park as improved recreational facilities with parking, marked trails, and picnic facilities.
- 3) Create a trail network/greenway plan for the entire town that identifies future trail connections and properties to be protected. These trails and properties should also connect to resources in the adjacent communities.
- 4) Educate landowners about the benefits of leaving lands open to the public, and the liability protections provided by existing laws.
- 5) Ensure that recreational opportunities are available to the elderly population and those with disabilities.
- 6) Visit Bridgewater's existing recreational facilities annually to determine if improvements are necessary.