

E. RECREATION

The purpose of this section is to:

1. Identify and profile the recreational facilities and resources in Whitneyville in terms of their type and significance;
2. Assess the adequacy of recreational facilities in Whitneyville; and
3. Identify needed upgrades to existing recreational facilities or investments in new ones.

FINDINGS

There are a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities in Whitneyville including a community baseball field and basketball court, public access to the Machias River, and multi-use trails. The Hillgrove Community Center hosts indoor recreational activities and community events. Additional recreational opportunities are available in the neighboring community of Machias. Recreational facilities and activities in Whitneyville benefit from the dedicated support of volunteers and private citizens. Facilities are well maintained and should continue to serve the community's needs over the planning period.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Whitneyville has numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation, including a little league baseball field, a basketball court, a multi-use trail, and boat launch with access to the Machias River. Opportunities for outdoor recreation in Whitneyville and surrounding communities contribute to the quality of life for local residents. Outdoor recreation in Whitneyville is promoted through the Recreation Committee and volunteer efforts.

Little League Field

The Whitneyville Little League Field is located on Cross Street immediately west of the village. Whitneyville's Recreation Committee oversees maintenance of the field which is in good condition. No capital investment in the baseball field is anticipated over the next 10 to 15 years.

Basketball Court

The town basketball court is located in the village and maintained by the Recreation Committee. The court will need to be repaved and repairs to the fencing will need to be made in the relatively near future. The estimated cost of the repairs is \$10,000, which the Town anticipates raising through a combination of taxation and donations.

Access for Recreational Boating

The primary access point for recreational boating in Whitneyville is the boat launch on Canal Road. This facility includes a natural surface (sand and mud) boat launch for use by hand-carry (canoe and kayak) boaters and small, trailered boats and a small gravel parking area with enough room for several vehicles. The boat launch, which is privately-owned, is actively used by fishermen, who fish from boats and from shore. For canoeists and kayakers, it is a popular take-out point coming down-river on the Machias River and is also used as a put-in point going down river toward Machias.

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The town wishes to recognize the generosity of the landowner who allows public use of the Canal Road boat launch. While the current arrangement seems stable, the town would be interested in working with the land-owner to maintain public access if the situation changes.

Access for ATV and Snowmobile Use

Whitneyville enjoys excellent access for snowmobile and ATV use. In addition to the Down East Sunrise Trail, an 86-mile off-road, multi-use trail which crosses Route 1A just south of the village, there are numerous privately maintained trails used by residents with landowner permission. A local snowmobile club grooms the Sunrise Trail (designated as ITS 82) for winter use by snowmobilers. Another trail used by ATVs and snowmobiles runs along the Tote Road as far as Wesley.

State grants are periodically available to assist with trail construction and maintenance. These include the Snowmobile Trail Grant Program,* which provides funds for the construction and maintenance of snowmobile trails; and the ATV Trail Grant Program,* which provides funds for the construction and maintenance of all-terrain vehicle trails.

Recreational trails in Whitneyville are well maintained. The primary access point to the trail in Whitneyville is where the trail crosses Route 1A. There is sufficient parking on the shoulder of Middle Street to accommodate the current level of use. However, the Town anticipates that improved parking for vehicles with trailers will be needed as use of the trail expands.

Preservation of Open Space & Traditional Access

Aside from the town's ball field, the most significant tract of open space commonly used for recreation in Whitneyville is the Down East Sunrise Trail, which is owned by the Maine DOT and managed by the Department of Conservation. Many other privately-owned parcels either allow public recreation or are used by local residents by long-standing arrangement with landowners. Whitneyville does not have a formal mechanism such as an open space fund or a partnership with a land trust to acquire important open space. At this time, the loss of access for traditional uses such as hunting and fishing is not a particularly significant concern in Whitneyville. A formal mechanism such as an open space fund is not currently necessary.

INDOOR RECREATION

The Hillgrove Community Center and the Whitneyville Public Library are the primary facilities for indoor recreation in Whitneyville. The Community Center has a multi-purpose common room that can accommodate 120 people. It is used for public functions including voting and town meetings as well as community events, such as suppers. The Community Center is equipped with a small kitchen. As noted in the previous chapter, the kitchen will need to be renovated at some point in the next 15 years.

Additional facilities for indoor recreation that are available for public use are located in Machias. They include the gymnasiums at the Rose Gaffney Elementary School and Machias Memorial High School as well as the auditorium and Center for Lifelong Learning at the University of Maine Machias, which has a gymnasium, fitness center and pool.

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Recreational Programs

There are a handful of recreational programs available in Whitneyville with many other recreational programs available in Machias.

A volunteer run Little League program is available in the summer. Little League teams are privately organized, but they make use of the town-owned ball field.

Similarly the Washington County Cooperative Extension runs an annual week-long summer camp at the Hillgrove Community Center.

Additional recreational programs available to Whitneyville residents in Machias include youth basketball and soccer at Rose Gaffney School and a variety of recreational programs at the Center for Lifelong Learning.

REGIONAL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Recreational resources in Washington County have an impact on the local and regional economy. Tourist-related businesses that rely on recreational opportunities are significant sources of income to some towns in the area. Regional recreation facilities accessible to Whitneyville's residents and to visitors include wildlife refuges, parks, golf courses, picnic areas, public access to surface waters, and hiking and snowmobile trails. Major regional recreational resources include:

1. Cobscook Bay State Park in Edmunds: 888 acres; more than 100 campsites and shelters are on the water's edge; boating; hot showers; picnic area; hiking and groomed cross-country ski trails, hiking trails.
2. Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land, Bold Coast Trails, maintained by the State, contains almost five miles of dramatic cliff-bound ocean shore.
3. Down East Sunrise Trail – 90 mile multi-use rail-trail from Ellsworth to Ayers Junction in Charlotte.
4. Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge: 16,000 acres north of Calais, 6,700 acres in Edmunds. Migratory birds, big game and 50 miles of trails.
5. Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge in Steuben: 3,335 acres on the mainland and several islands, variety of birds.
6. Roque Bluffs State Park: 2,300-foot beach, picnic tables, grills, playground.
7. Roosevelt Campobello International Park in Campobello, N.B. A 2,800-acre park that includes the cottage and the grounds where Franklin Roosevelt and his family vacationed. The Island also has a tourist information center.

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RECOMMENDED POLICIES & STRATEGIES

Given the importance of providing adequate recreational opportunities for its citizens, the town has developed the following policies and implementation strategies.

Goal: Whitneyville will maintain existing facilities & expand recreational access for its citizens.			
Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Whitneyville will maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.	Whitneyville will make necessary improvements to the town basketball court.	Recreation Committee	Short-term (1-3 years)
Whitneyville will preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.	Whitneyville will work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses.	Selectmen	On-going
Whitneyville will continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to the Machias river for boating, fishing, and swimming; and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.	Whitneyville will continue to respect private property rights but seek to maintain traditional use of private rights of way to the water. Negotiations with private landowners to secure long-term access will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement/celebration of landowners who continue the centuries old practice of allowing public use of their lands; • Informal agreements allowing public use of lands; • More formal agreements allowing public use of lands until and unless problems arise from disrespectful use of private land; • Providing property tax incentives to property owners who grant written, revocable rights of access across their property; • Purchasing rights of first refusal for access points or property of critical importance to the fishery; • Purchasing permanent easements or fee title to access points or property of critical importance to the fishery. 	Selectmen	On-going