

Chapter 14

Recreational & Cultural Resources



Photo Credit: Tom Morgan

Introduction

Kennebunkport has an array of recreational and cultural resources that contribute significantly to the high quality of life in the community. From its vast conservation land and open space to scenic ocean and riverfront amenities, to recreational programs and activities for children and adults, the Town boasts a variety of opportunities for leisure and physical activity. Cultural facilities and organization provide numerous opportunities entertainment and enrichment for residents and visitors alike. Access to recreational and cultural resources is a key factor in what makes the Town such as desirable place to live and visit.

This chapter highlights key recreational resources in Kennebunkport. It includes an inventory of public and private facilities, trails and open space, and recreational programming. This chapter also provides an overview of the many types of cultural resources within Town. Maintenance needs, anticipated service needs for the future population, and potential impacts to recreational and cultural resources associated with climate change are also discussed.



Image Credit: Tom Morgan

Recreational Resources

Kennebunkport offers a range of both passive and active recreational opportunities. As defined by the US Environmental Protection Agency, *passive recreation* includes “recreational activities that do not require prepared facilities like sports fields or pavilions. Passive recreational activities place minimal stress on the site’s resources; as a result, they can provide ecosystem benefits and are highly compatible with natural resource protection.” Examples of passive recreation include:

- Walking
- Bird watching
- Historic and archaeological exploration
- Swimming
- Cross-country skiing
- Bicycling
- Running/jogging
- Climbing
- Horseback riding
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Camping
- Hiking
- Wildlife viewing
- Observing and photographing nature
- Picnicking.¹

In contrast, active recreation “refers to a structured individual or team activity that requires the use of specific facilities, courses, fields, or equipment.” Examples of active recreational activities include:

- Baseball
- Football
- Soccer
- Golf
- Hockey
- Tennis
- Downhill skiing
- Skateboarding.²

Table 14-1 includes many recreational facilities and amenities in Kennebunkport, including parks, beaches, conservation land and open space with trails, scenic and sightseeing destinations, clubs and associations, and other recreational facilities and amenities. Additional maps showing conservation land are included in the Land Use and Natural Resources Chapters.

Table 14-1 Recreational facilities and amenities in Kennebunkport (Source: Town of Kennebunkport, ME GIS, KCT)

Facility	Address	Ownership	Acres	Active											Passive														
				Baseball/Softball	Basketball	Gymnasium	Multi-purpose Field	Tennis Courts	Playground	Small Craft Launch	Golf or Disc Golf	Mountain Biking	Docks	Ice Skating	Programming	Scheduled Events	Public Gathering	Walking Path / ROW	Benches	Picnic Area	Hiking / Trails	Swimming	Fishing	XC Skiing	Birding	Camping	Sightseeing / Vista		
Parks																													
Parson's Field	27 School St	Public	4.9	●			●		●								●												
Cape Porpoise Firefighter's Park	47 Mills Rd	Public	4.8	●					●								●	●											●
Silas Perkins Park	53 Ocean Ave	Public	0.25																										●
Rotary Park at Beachwood	105 Beachwood Ave	Public	1		●				●	●																			
Park at Crow Hill	164 Wildes District Rd	Public	4.6																										
The River Green	Green St	Private	0.56																										
Beaches																													
Kennebunkport Town Beach (Breakwater Beach)	Ocean Ave	Public	1.4																										●
Colony Beach	Ocean Ave	Private	1.8																										
Goose Rock Beach	Kings Hwy	Private	~30																										●
Other Rec. Facilities																													
Recreation Building-Community Room	20 Recreation Way	Public	-																										
Consolidated School	25 School St	Public	-			●																							
Ice Rink	25 School St	Public	-																										
The Grist Mill	Mill Ln	Private	-																										
Kennebunkport Disc Golf	27 School St	Private	-																										●

Facility	Address	Ownership	Acres	Baseball/Softball	Basketball	Gymnasium	Multi-purpose Field	Tennis Courts	Playground	Small Craft Launch	Golf or Disc Golf	Mountain Biking	Docks	Ice Skating	Programming	Scheduled Events	Public Gathering	Walking Path / ROW	Benches	Picnic Area	Hiking / Trails	Swimming	Fishing	XC Skiing	Birding	Camping	Sightseeing / Vista
				Active													Passive										
Sandy Pines Campground	227 Mills Rs	Private	-						●										●	●							●
Scenic & Sightseeing Destinations																											
Government Wharf	Off Josiah Curtis Ln	Public	-																								●
Parsons Way	Ocean Ave	Public	-															●									●
Cape Porpoise Pier	81 Pier Rd	Public	-																								●
Cleave's Cove	Off Ocean Ave	Private	-															●				●			●		●
Grist Mill Property	Mill Lane	Private	-																								
Conservation Land & Open Space																											
Rachel Carson Wildlife Refuge	Multiple Locations	Public	500																			●			●	●	
Goat Island Lighthouse	Island	Private	2.5																								●
Tyler Brook Preserve	Off Rt 9	Private	138																			●					
Town Forest	Off Guinea Rd	Private	978																			●					
Vaughn Island	Island	Private	36.6																							●	●
Cape, Redin, Stage and Green Islands	Island	Private	12.1; 5.1, 25.6																								●
Craig Woods	Main St	Private	6.8							●																	
The Emmons-Chick Properties	Gravelly Brook Rd	Private	223.1							●																	
The Edwin L. Smith Preserve	Guinea Rd	Private	1,100									●									●						
Cape Porpoise Greenbelt	Clement Huff Rd	Private	6.6 miles															●				●					
James Woods	North St	Private	15																			●					●

Facility	Address	Ownership	Acres	Baseball/Softball	Basketball	Gymnasium	Multi-purpose Field	Tennis Courts	Playground	Small Craft Launch	Golf or Disc Golf	Mountain Biking	Docks	Ice Skating	Programming	Scheduled Events	Public Gathering	Walking Path / ROW	Benches	Picnic Area	Hiking / Trails	Swimming	Fishing	XC Skiing	Birding	Camping	Sightseeing / Vista	
Active																Passive												
Clubs & Associations																												
Cape Arundel Golf Club	19 River Rd	Private									•																	
Kennebunk River Club	116 Ocean Ave	Private						•					•		•													•
Arundel Yacht Club	51 Ocean Ave	Private											•		•													
Goose Rocks Beach Association	19 Community House Rd	Private						•		•					•													



Image credit: Tom Morgan

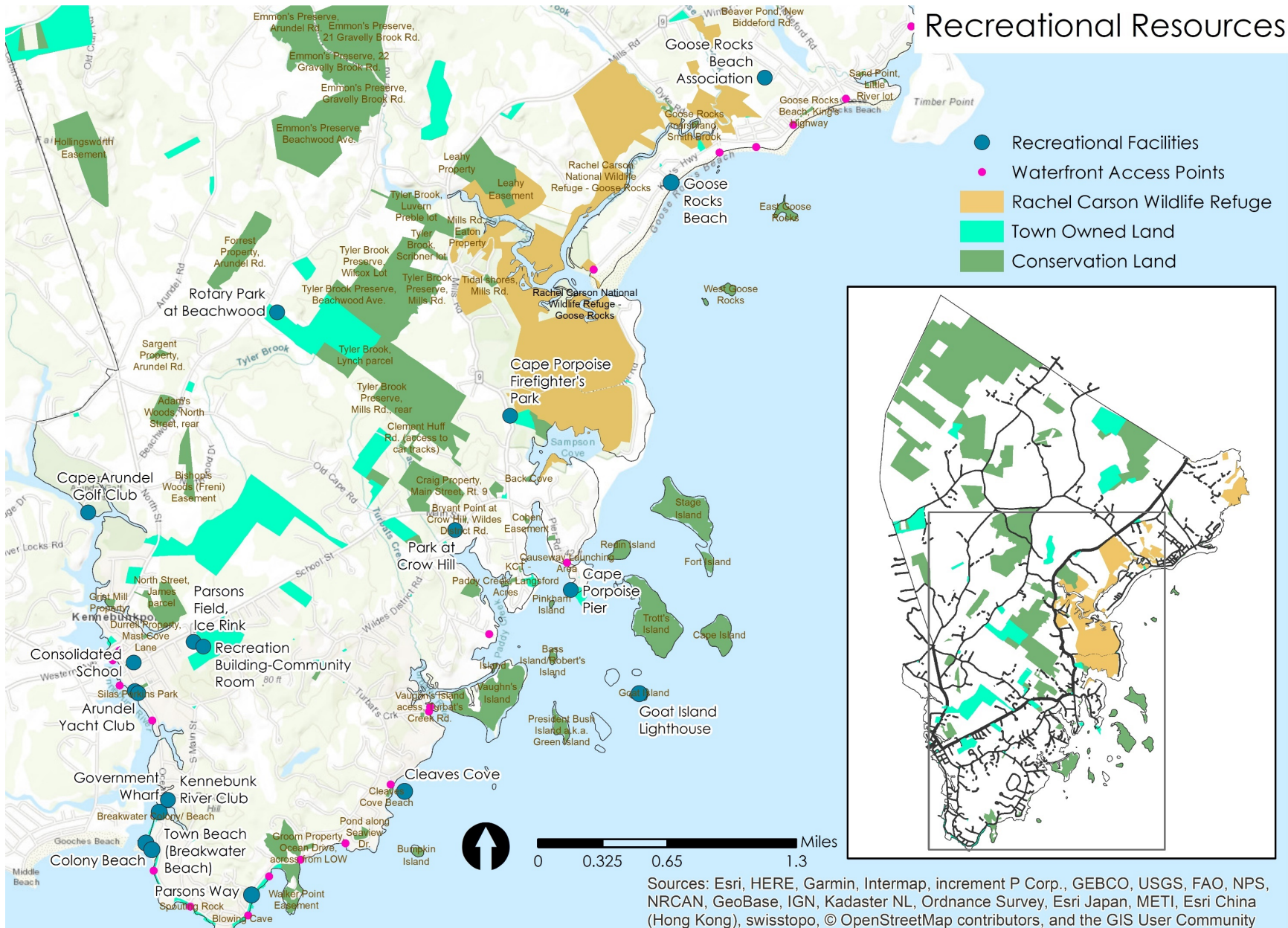


Figure 14-1 Recreational facilities and amenities (Source: MEGIS)

There are four town parks in Kennebunkport:

- Rotary Park at Beachwood is open from 8 AM to sunset and offers tennis courts, a basketball court, a playground, and a picnic area.
- Parson's field is located next to the Consolidated School and has a baseball/softball diamond, a playground, concession stand, multi-purpose room, commercial kitchen, restrooms, and open space and playing fields.
- Cape Porpoise Firefighter's Park located on Mills Road has a baseball/softball field, picnic area, and small playground.
- Silas Perkins Park offers benches and scenic views of the Kennebunk River.



Cape Porpoise Firemen's Park (Source: TripAdvisor)(Placeholder image)

Each of these locations can be used by the public for scheduled events. Dogs are not permitted at these parks.³



Figure 14-2 Aerial image of Parsons Field and adjacent Consolidated School and Kennebunkport Disc Golf course (left) and Aerial image of Rotary Park at Beachwood. This image was captured before the construction of the new recreation building (Source: Google Earth, placeholder images)

One of the premiere recreational sites in Kennebunkport is Goose Rocks Beach (Figure 14-3). This beach is approximately two miles long and offers residents and visitors a range of passive recreational opportunities including sunbathing, swimming, paddle boarding, jogging and walking, fishing, cross country skiing, and horseback riding. Beachgoers can enjoy scenic views of the Atlantic and islands, birdwatching, and even spot harbor seals.



Figure 14-3 Aerial image of Goose Rocks Beach and Timber Point (Source: Google Earth)

Ownership of beach parcels includes a combination of Kennebunkport Conservation Trust (KCT) and other private owners and the Town. Use of Goose Rocks Beach is regulated under the Town Ordinance Chapter 24-11, which allows active and passive recreational and recreational related purposes and activities customarily associated with beaches. Beachfront property owners are entitled to preferred use of a reserved portion of the beach adjacent to their upland property.

Property owners may exclude members of the general public from the reserved area, however the public has walking rights to cross the reserve area at any time. Chapter 24-11 prohibits the general public from engaging in a number of activities such as alcohol or tobacco use,

The KCT uses Goose Rocks Beach as an outdoor classroom for their [Trust in the Children](#) and [Discovery Days](#) programs, which are based out of their headquarters at Emmons Preserve.

camping, launching motorized boats, fires, climbing on rocks or seawalls of adjacent properties, overnight and storage of beach equipment. With permission from upland owners and a permit, mass gatherings may be allowed. Pets must be kept under control of their owner and cleaned up after. Horseback riding is permitted from September 15 through May 14 and regulated by the Town Horseback Riding on Goose Rocks Beach Ordinance (Chapter 24 Article 1). Horses are allowed only on the area below the mean high water mark. The Town has a Beach Advisory Committee charged with providing guidance on management of the beach premises (Town Ordinance Chapter 24 § 10).

Access points to the beach are shown in Figure 14-4, which is available through the Town Clerk's office. The Transportation Chapter provides an overview of the resident and non-resident parking sticker program.

Conservation Land and Open Space

As discussed in Chapter 3 Land Use, Kennebunkport has a significant amount of conservation land and Town-owned land that provide ample opportunities for recreation.⁴ Over 2,356 acres of land, including several islands, are permanently protected. Approximately 71% of the total conservation land is held by the KCT.⁵ The Town owns an additional 358 acres of land that is not permanently protected but not developable due to temporary easements or existing development such as ball fields.

One unique recreational opportunity in Kennebunkport is island camping. Camping is permitted on Stage Island, Trott Island, Cape Island, and Vaughn Island (Figure 14-5). There is no public transportation out to the islands.

New open space includes the Meadow Woods Preserve, a 48-acre preservation project on the Kennebunkport and Biddeford border, which will provide outdoor gathering space, trails, a dog recreation area, and educational opportunities. It is the KCT's goal for this project to "bridge the gap between conservation and recreation in a new way for our town".⁶

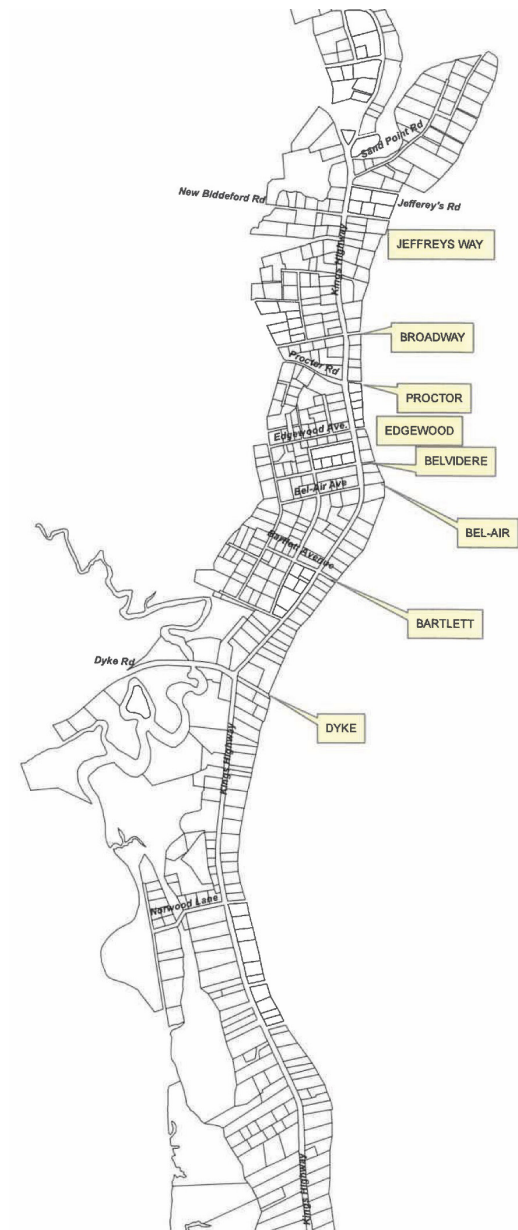


Figure 14-4 Goose Rocks Beach public access points (Source: KCT)



Figure 14-5 Camping locations on the islands (Source: KCT)

A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF KCT TRAILS AND PRESERVES IS AVAILABLE AT:

[HTTPS://STATIC1.SQUARESPACE.COM/STATIC/532897CCE4B0BA32C2428CE3/T/5E133D0F88456A2A6F7FB0DE/1578319124760/KCT-PROPERTIESMAP_22.08x11.7-PROOF.PDF](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/532897cce4b0ba32c2428ce3/t/5e133d0f88456a2a6f7fb0de/1578319124760/KCT-PROPERTIESMAP_22.08x11.7-PROOF.PDF).

DETAILED ISLAND CAMPSITE MAPS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FOR [STAGE ISLAND](#), [CAPE ISLAND](#), [TROTT ISLAND](#), AND [VAUGHN ISLAND](#).

Trail Maintenance

The KCT currently has about 25 mile of trails in Kennebunkport. Most trails consist of natural cleared pathways. The Trust has a total of nearly one mile of bridges in wet areas, which are built and maintained by volunteer Trail Stewards. The KCT reports that there is a constant need for trail maintenance, such as cutting back growth. Many hikers take it upon themselves to assist with keeping trails clear. KCT aims for natural and resilient trails. Trails are closed from time to time for some or all uses, such as mountain biking, when the ground is too wet to support time.⁷

The Trust is also always developing new trails. A trail complex will be built at the recently acquired property that runs from Route 9 and the Oak Ridge Road, as well as adjacent to the Trolley Museum.⁸

Land Acquisition

The KCT has a plan that guides future land acquisition. Many properties that the KCT seeks to preserve are parcels that are adjacent to other preserves that increase connectivity and size of wildlife areas. Occasionally the KCT actively seeks out property owners. Preserving land is a balance between opportunity and price. Acquisition of the Trust's most recent five properties occurred simultaneously.⁹

The Parks and Recreation Department does not actively seek out new property for recreational purposes at this time.

Cultural Resources

Table 14-2 lists a selection of societies, associations, libraries, churches, and halls located in Kennebunkport. These facilities offer diverse cultural experiences for members and the general public. Among the town’s prominent cultural resources are the Kennebunkport Historical Society, Seashore Trolley Museum, Atlantic Hall, and libraries.

The Historical Society, a non-profit, member supported organization founded in 1952, is dedicated to preserving the social, cultural, and architectural history of the town. The Trolley Museum is the oldest and largest electric railway museum in the world. Patrons can explore unique museum exhibits and take a ride down a short stretch of railway track. Atlantic Hall is home to the Cape Porpoise Town Library and has provided a location for weddings, memorials, parties, dances, town meetings, concerts, plays, filmmaking, and more for nearly 100 years.

Two noteworthy resources in Kennebunk: River Tree Arts and the Center at Lower Villages, a senior center that is accessible to Kennebunkport residents over age 50, are also include in this table of cultural resources. Other religious facilities, including the Franciscan Monastery and grounds in Kennebunk, are located within a short drive of Kennebunkport.

Table 14-3 lists the halls and meeting rooms that can be used for a range of social, municipal, and business events.

In addition to these resources, there are dozens of art galleries, restaurants, and shops in Kennebunkport and across the river in Kennebunk that provide opportunities for learning, enrichment, and leisure. Regional resources include movie theaters, YMCA, the Arundel Barn Playhouse, art museums, bowling alleys, indoor ice arenas, children’s museums, Portland’s Symphony Orchestra, concerts and state presentations, amusement parks, and professional sports events.¹⁰The Kennebunk-Kennebunkport-Arundel Chamber of Commerce provides a one stop shop for accommodations, recreational and cultural resources, and business events. The Chamber’s website hosts a detailed [calendar](#) with an extensive range of events and activities.



Trolley Museum (Credit: Liz Durfee)



Atlantic Hall (Source: Atlantic Hall website)

Table 14-2 Cultural facilities

Facility	Address
Cape Porpoise Town Library	173 Main St
Center at Lower Village	175 Port Road in Kennebunk
Church on the Cape (United Methodist)	3 Langsford Rd
First Congregational Church	141 North St
Kennebunkport Historical Society	125 North St
Louis T. Graves Memorial Library	18 Maine St
River Tree Arts	35 Western Ave, Kennebunk
Saint Ann's Episcopal Church	167 Ocean Ave
Seashore Trolley Museum	195 Log Cabin Rd
South Congregational Church UCC	2 North St
Village Baptist Church	6 Maine St

A map of the Trolley Museum Campus is available at:
<https://trolleyuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2017/04/campus-overview-v2.pdf>

Table 14-3 Halls and meeting room

Halls and Meeting Rooms	Address	Capacity
American Legion Hall	102 Main St	100
Atlantic Hall	173 Main St	125
Consolidated School Gymnasium	25 School St	400+
Goose Rocks Fire Station	2 Winter Harbor Rd	100
Perkins House, Louis T. Graves Memorial Public Library	18 Maine St	30
Police Station Meeting Room	101 Main St	20
South Church Community House	2 North St	120
South Congregational Church UCC	2 North St	300
Village Fire Station Meeting Room	32 North St	70

Festivals and Town Events

Kennebunkport is home to the nationally recognized Christmas Prelude celebration, which has brought together community members and visitors since 1982. The festival was designated as one of the Top 100 Events in North America for 2015 by ABA and voted the #2 Christmas Town in America by HGTV. This two-week-long festival is held in the beginning of December and includes activities and events ranging from fireworks, parades, and candlelight tours to ice carving, bonfires at Fire + Ice at Nonantum Resort, to shopping, chili fest, and sightseeing around town.



Image credit: Liz Durfee

The COVID-19 pandemic brought a year of change to the programming and festivals offered by the Town in 2020. To avoid large gatherings of people, many Christmas Prelude events were held virtually, including the Hat Parade, cooking and cocktail classes, a tree and wreath festival and Santa reading.

In 2019, the Parks and Recreation Department held its third annual Chalk the 'Port event in September. The event was held at 20 Recreation Way and featured chalk painters from Maine, Pennsylvania, and Florida. The event offers something for all ages. In addition to enjoying the chalk art, the festival included a 5k color run where participants were decorated with chalk as they ran the course, a pancake breakfast, lobster rolls and chowder, and a Chalk the Block Party with beer tent, live music, carnival games, ice cream sundaes, and campfire s'mores.¹¹ In 2020 a Mini Chalk Festival was held in the Full Circle parking lot. **[Insert Chalk Festival Photos]**

Other Local Events include:

- February is for Lovers, Paint the Town Red Specials
- Winterfest
- Maine Restaurant Week
- Maine Maple Sunday
- Memorial Day Parades
- Kennebunkport Festival (June)
- Kennebunkport Festival Art of Dining Dinners
- Launch Maritime Festival
- George HW Bush Celebrity Golf Classic
- 2nd Friday Art Walks
- Paddle Battle on the Kennebunk River
- Seashore Trolley Speakeasy
- Polar Plunge at Gooch's Beach, Kennebunk
- May Day Festival, Kennebunk
- Farmers' Market, Kennebunk

Source:

<https://kennebunkportmainelodging.com/events/>

Programming and Events

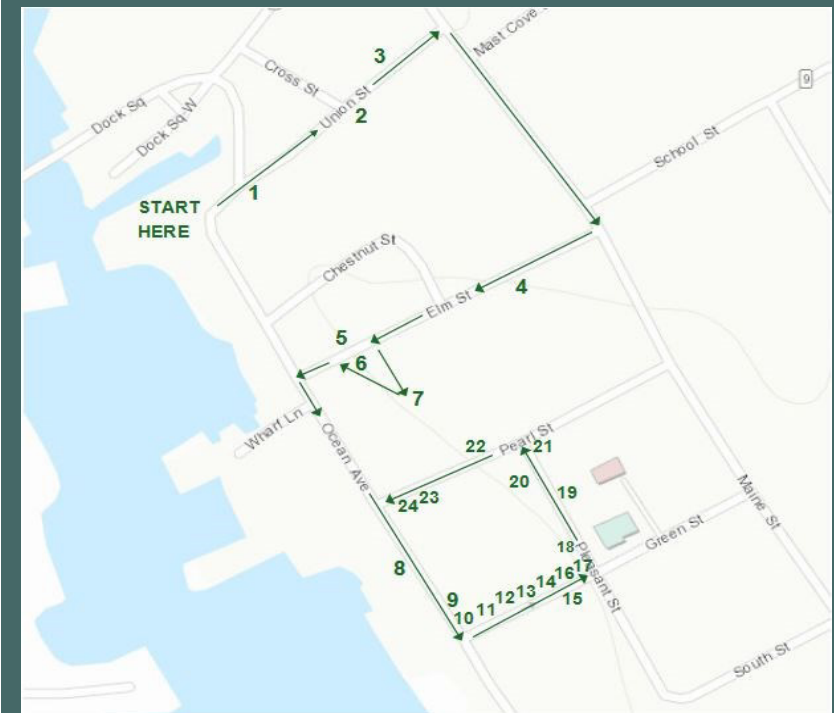
The Kennebunkport Parks & Recreation Department offers a many seasonal and year-round programs, activities, and events for children, seniors, and adults. The new recreation building enabled the Department to double the programs offered in 2019 compared to 2018.¹²

As of January 2021, youth classes and activities include daily school year childcare for pre-K through grade 5 with structured time and support for schoolwork as well as social time and activities. After school Adventure programs for youth from 2:45 to 5pm for children ages pre-K through grade 6 in the Consolidated School Gymnasium for a low cost of \$10/day. Senior programs include the senior pen pal program, which provides seniors with the chance to connect with others and get to know new people. Through this program, seniors correspond with a child that attends the Childcare Program. In the summer, free low-impact, joint-friendly tai chi classes are offered on the north side of Parsons Field.

The Town also offers enrichment programs. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many offerings are now virtual. For example, community members can participate in a five-session virtual genealogy class to educate about family tree research. KPort Krafters, a meet up group for community members to socialize while working on their personal knitting and kraft projects, is also supported by the Town through monthly Zoom meetings. The Kennebunkport Parks & Recreation website also provides information about and access to a number of educational online games for youth and adults.

Shade Tree Walking Tour

The Town has mapped out a self-guided, 30-minute shade tree walking tour featuring 24 shade trees. A brochure is available with descriptions of each tree at: https://www.kennebunkportme.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif3306/f/uploads/tree_tour_final.pdf



During school vacation in February, the Parks & Recreation Department offers daily winter recreation activities for youth ages kindergarten to grade 7 from 8am-5pm. February Vacation Adventures include snowshoeing, ice skating, movies, and sledding.

The Parks and Recreation Department is currently developing programming for a modified summer camp focused on keeping campers safe in accordance with Center for Disease Control COVID-19 guidelines as well as offering local trips.¹³

The Town's detailed website (<https://kennebunkportrec.com/info/default.aspx>) provides residents with up-to-date information about recreational facilities, amenities, and events. Recreational opportunities offered through the Parks and Recreation Department as of February 2021 are listed in Table 14-4. The Parks and Recreation Department sponsors and/or allows the following programs to use Department facilities: little league, youth sports spectators, park users, RSU 21 High School "Club Teams".

Past programming has included adult enrichment classes like sushi rolling, smartphone photography, and holiday tablescape. In 2019, the Department also hosted a 5k color run, family

carnival, live music, beer garden, and a zombie dash, which brought in over 200 people.¹⁴

There are two full time and three part time Parks and Recreation Department staff. Volunteers also assist with running programs.¹⁵ The Town has a Recreation Committee that provides recommendations regarding programming, capital projects, and events. The Committee members play a significant role as volunteers and a source of grassroots marketing. The Town has a rigorous budgeting process and special revenue account that requires that the department critically assess expenses in order to keep net revenues in the positive.¹⁶ This helps to keep the cost of participation in recreational programming and activities low. Scholarships are available for participation in recreation programming. Events like Chalk the Port and the 5k Color run help fund scholarships.

The recreation and culture budget for 2015 through 2019 is displayed in Table 14-5. The recreation budget increased from 2015 through 2018, then declined by nearly 30% from 2018 to 2019. The increase in recent years was primarily associated with the construction of the new Parks and Recreation building, as well as maintenance of Parsons Field.¹⁷ The total recreation and culture budget declined by 4% from 2015 through 2019.

Table 14-4 Parks and Recreation Department recreational programs

Sports Teams	Classes & Programs	Events
Adult basketball	All Levels Yoga	Father-Daughter Dance
Adult Soccer	Senior Yoga	Mother-son activity
Floor hockey	Early release Wednesdays	Outdoor Adventure
Hockey	KASA	Senior Citizens Trips
K-1 basketball	New Horizons	Senior Luncheons
2 nd grade basketball	Craft classes	Disc Golf tournament
Kindergarten soccer	Specialty Camps	Dodgeball tournament
Softball	STEM Club	Hockey tournament
Spring soccer	Summer Camp	
Tennis	Tai Chi	
Travel Basketball	Vacation adventure	
Youth basketball	Zumba	
Youth soccer	Ski Program	

Table 14-5 Recreation and Culture Budget (Source: Town of Kennebunkport Annual Reports 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019)

Recreation and Culture Budget	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	% Change 2015-2019
Recreation	\$322,245	\$339,872	\$357,542	\$360,360	\$257,493	-20%
Graves Library	\$115,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$126,000	\$150,000	30%
Cape Porpoise	\$11,175	\$12,675	\$12,675	\$12,675	\$13,950	25%
Parsons Way	\$1,780	\$2,890	\$3,500	\$289	\$2,890	62%
Miscellaneous agencies	\$7,103	\$7,281	\$6,050	\$7,747	\$10,790	52%
Goose Rocks Beach Committee	\$30,896	\$39,743	\$25,506	\$38,767	\$34,101	10%
Total	\$488,199	\$522,461	\$525,273	\$548,439	\$469,214	-4%

Capital Projects, Improvements, and Long-Term Planning Priorities

The Town recently completed two major projects: construction of a new Parks and Recreation building and construction of a new ice rink at Parsons Field.

As of early 2021, the Parks and Recreation Department is engaged in planning and budgeting for pickleball court space at Parsons Field. There is significant interest in and demand for pickleball space among adult and senior residents, who comprise a majority of the population of the town.¹ Residents typically use indoor gym space at the Consolidated School or travel to the Waterhouse Center in Kennebunk to play pickleball. The Department is planning to develop a slab that would provide space for three courts and could also be used for other activities such as roller hockey. The tennis courts at Rotary Park have fallen into disrepair and are also due for an upgrade. This project would include relaying the courts and improving the drainage systems.¹⁸ Additional planned improvements include reorienting the softball/baseball field at Parsons Field to avoid significant sun glare during evening games.

The Department's long-term goal for recreational resources is for Parsons Field to be developed into a multi-use space that supports more active recreation in fields that currently provide general open greenspace. Potential additions to this park could include an ADA compliant splash pad, which would be an attractive amenity for residents with children and grandchildren.

Staff have also identified installation of hockey boards for roller hockey use on the planned pickleball slab as an additional use at Parsons Field. These amenities would be attractive residents with children and grandchildren. In the summer of 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Parks and Recreation Department held drive in concerts. Staff would like to continue to hold these events and offer concessions in the future.¹⁹

Other Recreational Opportunities

Many of the recreational and cultural opportunities in Kennebunkport draw in summer visitors and tourists. In addition to visiting the Town's beautiful beaches, visitors and residents alike, can take advantage of the many opportunities to enjoy the waterfront that the Town's coastal and riverfront location offers. For example, water recreation enthusiasts can embark on sightseeing tours, offshore sailing excursions, and whale watching trips. The breakwater at the Kennebunk River mouth is a popular location for saltwater angling. In 2019, the Town issued 84 non-commercial licenses for shellfish harvesting, 75 of which were to Kennebunkport residents.²⁰ A map of waterfront access points is included in the Transportation Chapter.

Deer, waterfowl, small game, and upland bird hunting is possible in many locations of the town with proper permits and licenses. MRSA Title 14 §159-A limits the liability of property owners and landlords that allow others to pursue recreational or harvesting activities on privately owned land. As a result, more land is open to the public for recreational use unless posted. There are 27

¹ Approximately 61% of residents are age 45 or older (American Community Survey 2018 5-year estimates)

parcels totaling 860 acres that are in one of four current use programs in Kennebunkport (tree growth, open space, farmland, and working waterfront).²¹ There are 555 acres of land within the

Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in Kennebunkport. Hunting and fishing are permitted in designated areas of the refuge. Hunting is also allowed on KCT holdings.²²

2018 Community Input Surveys

Recreational and cultural resources contribute significantly to what makes Kennebunkport a great place to live.

In 2018, the Growth Planning Committee also conducted a community survey in preparation for starting the Comprehensive Plan update process. When asked what they liked about Kennebunkport, responses included:

- Rural character, beach, hiking trails, picturesque downtown
- Peace and quiet interacting with nature.
- The library
- Access to beaches and ocean
- Natural preserves

Additionally, nearly 90% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with development of bike and pedestrian paths.

Summary of survey results available at:

https://www.kennebunkportme.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3306/f/uploads/community_survey_revised_5.21.19_r1.pdf

The Town also collected input on ideas to budget for in 2019. Responses included:

- Increased use of the beach with housing density and increased campsites.
- Do we need more community service officers?
- Do we need to expand patrol in marsh areas?
- A long-standing concern is dwindling public access to the ocean and the Kennebunk River.
- Market the town as a great place to settle as a suburb of Portland or Portsmouth, to raise a family.
- Promote the great schools (Consolidated is a gem), the great Rec program, the lovely library, the abundance of natural recreational opportunities.

Full survey results available at:

https://www.kennebunkportme.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3306/f/uploads/public_budget_ideas_2019_summary.01.18.18.pdf

Recreational and Cultural Resource Planning

Level of Service

Parks and recreation level of service standards can be used as part of the Town’s overall strategy to evaluate community needs and priorities. Other important sources of information that help inform needs and priorities include surveys, interviews, site visits, and workshops.²³ Level of service standards can also help identify the size and location of future resources and amenities needed to accommodate growth, as well inform code and site plan review regulations.

The most common metric for determining if a community has enough parkland is to acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. However, there are no nationally accepted standard for determining ideal levels of service for parkland or criteria for what resources should be included as “parkland”. The American Planning Association recommends that communities count only developable, publicly accessible parkland within their jurisdiction that can be used to meet its needs for parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, open play space, and recreation centers.²⁴ Resources such as beaches, golf courses, or conservation land are excluded as they cannot be developed to meet those needs. Using this approach, it is estimated that the facilities listed in Table 14-6 provide approximately 4.4 acres of parkland per 1,000 year-round residents.²

The Trust for Public Land developed a booklet of city park facts that includes data for a variety of parkland metrics, including parkland per 1,000 residents by city. In this assessment, parkland includes city, county, metro, state, and federal acres within city limits. The median park acres per 1,000 residents in low density cities was 24.0 acres, while that of high density cities was 6.9 acres.

(Source: 2017 City Park Facts, Trust for Public Land)

Table 14-6 Facilities and acreage included in level of service estimate

Facility	Address	Ownership	Acres
Parson's Field	27 School St	Public	4.9
Cape Porpoise Firefighter's Park	47 Mills Rd	Public	4.8
Silas Perkins Park	53 Ocean Ave	Public	0.25
Rotary Park at Beachwood	105 Beachwood Ave	Public	1
Park at Crow Hill	164 Wildes District Rd	Public	4.6
Total			15.6

Other metrics used for determining whether resources are sufficient include facilities per capita, building square footage per capita, revenue per capita, and operating expenditures per capita.¹

Does the GPC wish to evaluate level of service using a different metric?

² The estimated year-round population of Kennebunkport is 3,582 (2018 ACS 5-year estimates).

Accommodating Future Populations

Residents ages 60 to 64 comprise the largest five-year cohort in Kennebunkport, accounting for 12.1% of the town's total population.²⁵ Twenty-eight percent of the population is over age 65, while the population under age 20 comprises 18% of the population. Kennebunkport's population is projected to increase by approximately 10.5% in the period from 2016 through 2036 from 3,571 to 3,946 people.²⁶ In the county and the state, the total share of the population over age 65 is projected to increase from approximately 19% to just under 30% from 2016 to 2036. At the same time, the school age population (ages 0-19) in the county is projected to decline by 13% from 2016 to 2036, with the greatest decline (nearly 20%) occurring in the 15-19 age group.²⁷ Therefore, while it is important to maintain and enhance recreational facilities for all demographics, the Town will need to ensure that there are sufficient resources for the growing population of adults and seniors. Accessible trails, walking paths with benches, programming and classes, and amenities like pickle ball courts, discussed above, are likely to become increasingly desirable in the community.

Creating Great Public Spaces

Public spaces serve an important role in all communities by providing a place for gathering and contributing to sense of place. Recreational and cultural resources are key public spaces. The Project for Public Spaces offers 11 elements for creating great community places that Kennebunkport can incorporate into recreational planning efforts:

- 1) The community is the expert
- 2) Create a place, not a design
- 3) Look for partners
- 4) You can see a lot just by observing
- 5) Have a vision
- 6) Start with the petunias: lighter, quicker, cheaper
- 7) Triangulate (provide linkages between people)
- 8) They always say "it can't be done"
- 9) Form supports function
- 10) Money is not the issue
- 11) You are never finished.²⁸

Climate Change Impacts

The mean annual temperature in York County is projected to increase by 2-2.5°F from the period of 1995-2014 to 2035-2054.²⁹ By mid-century, the number of days when the heat index is 95°F or greater in Portland will average 13.5 days per year, compared to 4.0 days in the early 2000's. Error! Bookmark not defined. This increase in temperature will have impacts on recreational and cultural infrastructure as well as the health and wellbeing of recreators who may be at risk of heat related illness. Impacts to recreational resources may include decreased longevity and increased maintenance needs and increased need for irrigation. Increasing winter temperatures will likely limit opportunities for sledding, skiing, ice skating, and snowshoeing. Changes in precipitation may require more stormwater management and potential flooding of low-lying fields.

The town's beaches are among the resources that will likely be most significantly impacted by sea level rise and coastal storm surge associated with climate change. As sea level rises, the mean high and low tides will move farther inland, infringing on the land that is accessible to the general public as well as coastal property owners. This will impact uses such as horseback riders, who are only allowed on the beach below the mean high water mark.

Future planning considerations to adapt to these changes include:

- Increase the canopy cover at parks to provide shade.
- Incorporate water features such as splash pads to help keep visitors cool.
- Use pervious pavements and other green infrastructure in parks to reduce stormwater runoff.
- Avoid developing new facilities in area that are vulnerable to sea level rise and inland flooding.
- Consider acquiring open space and natural lands in strategic locations to act as a buffer from sea level rise and inland flooding.

¹ US Environmental Protection Agency. Passive vs active recreation. <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/11/174083.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ Town of Kennebunkport. Parks and Recreation Department. <https://www.kennebunkportme.gov/parks-and-recreation/pages/parks>

⁴ Office of Information Technology. Maine Office of GIS Data Catalog. Conserved Lands shapefile. Last updated July 8, 2019. Available at: <https://www.maine.gov/megis/catalog/>.

⁵ Office of Information Technology. Maine Office of GIS Data Catalog. Conserved Lands shapefile. Last updated July 8, 2019. Available at: <https://www.maine.gov/megis/catalog/>.

⁶ Kennebunkport Conservation Trust. Our Land is Your Land. Available at: <https://www.kporttrust.org/land-and-trails>

⁷ Tom Bradbury, Director, Kennebunkport Conservation Trust, email dated February 4, 2021.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ 2012 Town of Kennebunkport Comprehensive Plan

¹¹ Town of Kennebunkport. Parks and Recreation. <https://www.kennebunkportme.gov/parks-and-recreation/kport-chalk-port-event-color-run-5k-benefit-our-scholarship-program>

¹² Town of Kennebunkport. 2019 Annual report. Available: <https://www.kennebunkportme.gov/town-manager/pages/annual-town-reports>

¹³ Rec director, via email

¹⁴ Town of Kennebunkport. 2019 Annual report. Available: <https://www.kennebunkportme.gov/town-manager/pages/annual-town-reports>

¹⁵ Breese Reagle, Parks and Recreation Director, Town of Kennebunkport, email dated February 3, 2021.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Town of Kennebunkport. 2018 Annual report. Available: <https://www.kennebunkportme.gov/town-manager/pages/annual-town-reports>

¹⁸ Breese Reagle, Parks and Recreation Director, Town of Kennebunkport, phone conversation February 4, 2021.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Town of Kennebunkport Town Report 2019. Everett Leach, Kennebunkport Shellfish Warden.

²¹ Department of Administrative and Financial Services. Maine Revenue Services. (2017) ME Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary. Available at: <https://www.maine.gov/revenue/propertytax/municipalservices/statisticalsummary.htm>

²² Kennebunkport Conservation Trust. Trust in Our Town. Available:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/532897cce4b0ba32c2428ce3/t/59766f84197aea4ee2327839/1500934167373/kct+template.pdf>

²³ American Planning Association. PAS Memo by David Barth. 2016. Alternatives for Determining Parks and Recreational Level of Service. Available: <https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9101976/>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ ACS 2018 5-year estimates

²⁶ Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services. State Economist. Demographic Projections. Available: <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/economist/demographic-projections>

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Project for Public Spaces. Eleven principles for Creating Great Community Places. <https://www.pps.org/article/11steps>

²⁹ Fernandez et al. (2015) Maine's Climate Future: 2015 Update. Orono, ME. University of Maine. https://climatechange.umaine.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/439/2018/08/Maines_Climate_Future_2015_UpdateFinal-1.pdf