

CHAPTER 13: RECREATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Recreational opportunities are a significant component of Hanover's high quality of life. The Town of Hanover offers a wide range of recreational opportunity, both in the enjoyment of its natural assets and in organized activity and developed facilities. The former are covered in Chapter 5; the latter, both public and private, are the subject of this chapter.

2. COMMUNITY VALUES AND GOALS

Three-quarters of the Hanover residents surveyed by the Planning Board in 1994 held the opinion the Town then needed additional recreational facilities; bicycle paths and lanes (49%), walking trails (40%), and a recreation/community center (31%) were identified. (See Figure 13-1) Over half the rural residents surveyed in 1999 in the *Guiding Growth in Rural Hanover* cited hiking trails as an essential element in Hanover's rural character.

In providing open space and recreational activities, the Town shall strive to:

- provide recreation activities to meet town and neighborhood needs and for people of all ages,
- make the best possible use of the free and natural assets of the community,
- emphasize and support "life-time" or "carryover" sports and activities,
- encourage the provision of both public and private recreation facilities and activities,
- cooperate with the Dresden School District, Dartmouth College, neighboring communities and school districts, and private organizations in providing recreation opportunities, and
- increase public awareness of available recreation resources.

3. EXISTING RESOURCES

Recreation Programs

Town-sponsored Programs Existing Town facilities, private sector initiative to support and build town-managed facilities and the availability of Dartmouth College facilities have allowed the Town to channel its resources into recreation programs, both athletic and cultural, rather than the development of new recreation facilities.

From an office at the Community Center, a professional staff composed of a full-time Director and Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation organize, coordinate, and run a diverse program of sports, non-athletic activities and special events. The program is financially supported by the Town and, increasingly, by user fees. Forty percent of Parks and Recreation expenditures were funded by user fees in the 1991-92 fiscal year; 46% in 1995-96, and 52% in 2001-02.

The Parks and Recreation Department offers programs for children pre-school through grade 8 and runs all school athletic programs to grade 8. Norwich students are allowed to participate when they are 7th grade. The Dresden School District offers athletic programs for students in grades 9 through 12. Programs for seniors, including instruction in crafts and special

events, are offered at the Hanover Senior Center at 42 Lebanon Street. (See Figure 13-2)

The Department informs the public of its programs through a quarterly flyer, cable TV (CATV6), the *Valley News*, the *Spectator* and the Town website.

Dartmouth students comprise a significant portion of the Town population and contribute to the Town by mentoring and volunteering to coach various teams. Many of the recreation needs of Dartmouth students are served by the college.

Other Programs Available to Residents Hanover residents benefit from a variety of recreation programs, complimentary to Hanover Parks and Recreation programs, provided through private initiative, such as:

- Ski instruction programs offered by volunteers, chiefly at the Dartmouth Skiway, through **Spectra** and the nonprofit **Ford Sayre Memorial Ski Council**.
- Swimming instruction for people of all ages, based on the standard Red Cross curriculum, offered by the **Sid Hazelton Instructional Program** at Storrs Pond
- Tennis instruction at Storrs Pond, owned by the **Hanover Improvement Society**.
- Figure skating instruction, UDFSFA testing, a holiday show, and inter-and intra-club competition offered by the **Skating Club at Dartmouth**.
- Hikes, cross-country ski and snow-shoeing trips and birding outings are led by the **Hanover Conservation Council**.
- Instruction in ice hockey for children ages 3 to 17 offered by the **Hanover Hockey Association** at the Champion Rink.
- Little League baseball run by the **Rotary Club** and Babe Ruth baseball run by the **Lions Club**.
- Lightning Soccer, a program offered by **Dartmouth College** at Sachem Field.
- Recreational and social programs offered by the **Grafton County Senior Citizens Council** at the Upper Valley Senior Citizens Center in Lebanon.
- Dartmouth College has all sorts of recreational programs including art programs at the Hood Museum, film series at the Hopkins Center and Loew's theatre, performing arts at the Hopkins Center, equipment rentals through the Dartmouth Outing Club, canoe and kayak lessons at Ledyard Canoe Club, and a variety of exercise classes offered through the Fitness and Lifestyle Improvement Program (FLIP).

Recreation Facilities

Publicly-Owned Facilities Facilities such as the new Community Center, the school gyms and auditoriums will continue to be available to the public for meeting space and indoor activities such as amateur performances.

The Town owns and operates a new Senior and Community Center at 36 South Park. The Center provides office space, equipment storage, and a supervised gathering place during the school year for Hanover and Norwich students in grades 6 through 12. Students are offered sports, games, and socializing activities. Adults and community groups may arrange for use of the facility for parties, reunions, meetings, and play groups. Certain rooms are dedicated for use by seniors.

When school activities are not scheduled, a full size gymnasium at the Ray School is available for use by the Recreation Department. The Hanover High School gym, as well as two outdoor basketball courts, are used by the Recreation Department for basketball, volleyball, and tennis. A skateboarding area has been established at the Richmond School.

Howe and Etna libraries are regularly used for public gatherings, meetings and lectures as well as story time and book discussions.

Town and school playing fields are listed at Figure 13-3.

Other Town-owned facilities include Wilson's Landing, a public boat landing off Route 10 on the Connecticut River developed by the Lion's Club and maintained by the Town. Dagmar's Place, a small park at the intersection of Chase and Valley Roads, contains both bench seating and a play structure with swings.

Other Facilities Available to Residents Playing fields owned by others and currently available for use by Hanover residents are listed at Figure 13-4.

Dartmouth College offers fitness classes and the use of its recreational facilities to the larger community at scheduled times and usually for a fee or by paid membership. In addition to the facilities associated with the campus, the College owns and operates:

- Hanover Country Club, an 18-hole golf course with public membership and, in winter, cross-country ski trails.
- Ledyard Canoe Club, which provides boat rentals and boating courses.
- Oak Hill, a former ski-jumping and downhill ski area used for cross-country skiing, ski jumping, mountain biking and winter sports.
- Occom Pond, cleared in the winter for skating, with the help of the Hanover Improvement Society.
- Silver Fox Touring Center rents out winter sports equipment at the Dartmouth Outing Club House.
- Dartmouth Skiway McLane Family Lodge, trails and programs available for public use for fee.

The private non-profit **Hanover Improvement Society** operates:

- James W. Champion III Skating Rink at Sagem Village on Route 10 for use by youth at Hanover and Lebanon High schools and Dartmouth College students. Hours are set aside for public skating.
- Storrs Pond Recreation Area, a 140 acre park with beaches, outdoor pool, tennis courts, and a volleyball court, hiking and cross-country skiing trails. Summer camping and picnicking are also featured.

Open Space Lands Available for Recreation

A number of large open space tracts, such as Pine Park, are available to the public for passive recreation activities such as walking, picnicking, and nature observation. Some are Town owned, others are owned by private groups that allow public access. These spaces are covered in Chapter 5, Open Space Lands.

Recreation Corridors

Recreation corridors include trails for foot travel, ski trails, bike paths, roadways accommodating bicycle lanes, and snowmobile trails. Over half the respondents to the 1999 survey, *Guiding Growth in Rural Hanover*, felt hiking trails were an important, or very important, type of open space. Developing a interconnected trail system in town that links with trails in neighboring communities is a goal of this plan.

Most of the trails in Town open to the public have been identified and mapped by the Trails Committee, a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission. The best known is the Appalachian Trail, which enters the northeast corner of Town and progresses in a southwesterly direction to the Ledyard Bridge and Vermont. Thousands of hikers, including Hanover residents, Dartmouth College students and Appalachian Trail through-hikers, use the Appalachian Trail annually. Other trails have been developed on open space lands. The Dartmouth Outing Club maintains a system of trails in town including the Appalachian Trail. The Town's Class VI highways are no longer used regularly by vehicles, so are also popular for hiking.

Because bicycling is both transportation and recreation, the planning of bike paths and shared roadways needs to be considered in transportation patterns and road design. The Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Transportation Plan identified the Route 120 to Route 10 corridor as part of an existing regional bikeway system and the Etna Road to Greensboro Road corridor as a proposed bike route.

Snowmobile trails, mainly on private land, are overseen by the New Hampshire Snowmobile Association. Snowmobiles and other motorized recreational vehicles are not permitted on most Town-maintained trails located off Class VI roads.

4. NEEDS

Facilities

Notwithstanding the Town's impressive commitment to recreational opportunities for residents, it lacks direct control of many of the facilities and fields it uses. The school districts and Dartmouth College make their facilities available to Town residents only when not precluded by their own needs.

Several needs have been identified:

- A community/recreation/senior center with adequately sized activity rooms to provide the space now needed for youth, adults, and seniors. The Richard Black Center on Park Street responds to this need.
- Tennis courts and practice walls available to the public without cost.
- Playing fields available to the Town on demand, not just on a space availability basis. The Town-owned Greensboro Road property has been discussed as a site with potential for recreational development.
- Through easement or public ownership, protection of land open to the public for outdoor recreation.

A capital reserve fund for recreational facilities would enable the Town to save for these

facilities in an interest bearing account by budgeting and setting aside a portion of the expected cost each year over a few years. Such a reserve fund would avoid the burden of a single large expense, interest payments on a bond, or missed opportunities.

As new recreation activities are popularized--such as skateboarding and in-line skating--the Town must evaluate its response in terms of the perceived longevity of the need, and its investment in multi-purpose facilities as a way to accommodate the highest number of users. The Town will continue to cooperate with private organizations, school districts, and neighboring communities in the provision of recreation activities.

Recreation Corridors

A trails plan should be undertaken by the Trails Committee to address the issue of principal trail use and to assist residents in creating a connected and convenient system of pedestrian trails and wheeled vehicle trails. Additional trail linkages needed to continue the development of the Town's existing trail network should be identified.

In addition to obtaining the continuing cooperation of landowners, the Town can maintain the existing use of many trail sections by continuing its policy of keeping Town control over Class VI highways. The Town can also consider negotiating the exchange of right-of-way for a corridor of more benefit to the Town, or converting some Class VI roads to public trails.

The Bike/Recreational Path Committee has identified desirable bikeway and bike lane locations and impediments to their successful implementation, such as intersection alignment and highway striping. The safety of bicyclists and improvement of roadways for biking should be considered in the reconstruction or maintenance of Town roads. The Town can identify future linkages and, further, require nonresidential and large residential developments to accommodate the needs of bicyclists with site plan additions, such as a sheltered bike rack, to enhance and encourage bicycling as recreation and transportation.

The Conservation Commission should consider and then publicize hunting and fishing policies on Town-owned lands.

5. POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

- Continue the coordinated efforts of the Parks and Recreation Board, School Board, and Select Board and others to provide recreation opportunities to Hanover residents.
- Plan for multi-purpose outdoor recreation spaces to accommodate a variety of recreational user groups. For example, the new Community Center should serve multiple uses, including recreation and senior activities as well as space for amateur performances and community meetings.

Recreation Programs

- Continue and expand the efforts of the Park and Recreation Department to publicize information on the recreational activities and facilities in Town.
- Ensure that the Town Budget continues to reflect the importance of recreation to the well-

being of the community.

- Continue to utilize user fees to enhance the availability of organized programs.
- Continue to design programs to serve the interest of preschool, youth, teens, adult, and senior citizens, including a balance between cultural and art programs and athletic activities.
- Continue to facilitate public input as part of an ongoing process of program evaluation.

Recreation Facilities

- Coordination and cooperation between the Town, Dresden School District, Dartmouth College, the Hanover Improvement Society and other organizations is essential in the development of new facilities and optimal utilization of existing recreation facilities.
- Encourage the development of public and private indoor recreational facilities that would be available for use by residents.
- Continue to explore options for developing recreational facilities in cooperation with neighboring communities.
- Encourage or, when appropriate, require developers to set aside land for the provision of future residents' recreation needs.
- Establish a capital reserve account as a capital improvement budget item to provide for the development of new facilities.
- Incorporate tennis practice walls and tennis courts into the Town Capital Improvements Plan.
- Ensure facility maintenance is adequately funded, including a year-round field maintenance program.
- When available, utilize federal, state, and private funding sources to support the capital development of needed recreation facilities.
- As needs for new recreation facilities arise, consider and evaluate the appropriate role for the Town in meeting those needs.
- Explore the feasibility of developing pocket parks within existing residential areas.

Recreation Corridors

- Continue to pursue opportunities and funding for the development of bikeways. Road maintenance involving intersection alignment and striping should be spaced to accommodate bike lanes.
- When appropriate, have developers accommodate bicycles in the design of all developments and public works projects.
- Support efforts to publicize the trails in town available for use by the public.
- Fashion interconnected trail networks to expand opportunities for walking, mountain biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, and access to natural and open space areas from all parts of Town.
- Develop a plan to connect public access easement segments and implement it through voluntary donation or purchase.
- Establish a capital reserve account as a capital improvement budget item to provide for the acquisition of land and interests in land for outdoor recreation.
- Improve the townwide trail plan to provide off road options for a variety of users including hikers, skiers, mountain bikers, snowmobilers, motorized off road vehicle

users, and horse back riders.

Figure 13-1: 1994 Survey Responses

Question: Do you think there is a need for additional or new recreational facilities in Hanover and, if you do, what types?

	<i>% of 545</i>		<i>% of 545</i>
Bicycle paths/lanes	49	Ice skating	9
Trails for walking	40	Fishing	7
Recreation/community center	31	Boating	7
Wildlife preserve	25	Handicrafts instruction	6
Tennis courts	24	Golf course	5
Swimming	20	Paddle tennis courts	5
No more needed	20	Camping grounds	4
Trails for skiing	18	No opinion	4
Playgrounds and ball fields	16	Other	4
Outdoor basketball courts	18	Hunting	3
More parks	16	Snowmobile trails	3

Figure 13-2: Programs offered by Hanover Parks and Recreation Department

Team: Basketball, Soccer, Football, Flag Football, Field Hockey, Volleyball, Softball (Youth and Adult), Baseball, Lacrosse, Youth Track (Spring and Summer)

Non-team: Tai Chi, Karat E, Play Soccer Camp, Spring Training Class, Summer Art Camps, Sewing for Kids, Knitting, Pottery, Tennis, Summer Playground, Circle H Camp, Computer Camp, Project Build, Model Airplane Club, Jeopardy and Math Club, Adult Tap Dance, Craft Classes, Kripalu Yoga, Swing Dance, Ballroom Dance

Special Events: Occom Pond Party, Halloween Haunted House, K-4 Soccer Jamboree, Turkey Trot Road Race, Spring Fling Road Race, March Madness Family Picnic, Old Fashioned Fourth of July, Vacation Mini-camps, Muster Day, Dear Santa, Lacrosse Tournament, Volleyball Tournament, Middle School Dances

On-going: Rent-a-Kid, Teen Drop-in at Community Center

Figure 13-3 Town and School Playing Fields

<i>Field and Location</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Uses</i>
Etna Green Costello Memorial Field	First Baptist Church	General playground, neighborhood use, recreational baseball farm league
Hanover High School Athletic fields and Lebanon Street & Hovey Lane	Dresden School District	Hanover school athletics, recreation baseball, softball, lacrosse, football, track
Reservoir Road Fields Route 10 & Reservoir Road	Town of Hanover/ Dartmouth College*	Recreation soccer, softball, baseball hockey, cross-country skiing
Ray School Fields Reservoir Road	Hanover School District	Elementary school activities, playground playspace, nature trail, hiking
Thompson Terrace Brook Road	Dresden School District/Town of Hanover*	High school football, practices, baseball, middle school football
Sachem Field Route 10, Lebanon	Town of Hanover Dartmouth College	Town major athletic facility, soccer, lacrosse, baseball, softball
Route 5 Fields Norwich (planned)	Dresden School District	Field house, field sports
Grasse Road (planned)	Hanover Water Company	Baseball and softball

*subject to the implementation of 2002 Tri-Party Agreement between Dresden School District, Dartmouth College, and the Town of Hanover.

Figure 13-4: Playing Fields and Recreational Facilities Owned by Others

<i>Field and Location</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Uses</i>
Forward Farm Fields Route 10	Forward Family	Lacrosse and soccer
Fullington Fields Route 10	Dartmouth College	Field sports
Hanover Country Club Hilton Field Lane/Route 10	Dartmouth College	Golf course, cross country skiing sledding
Huntley Meadow Fields	Town of Norwich recreational baseball, adult women's soccer	High school soccer and softball practice, soccer
Lyme Road Field Route 10	Dartmouth College/ Dresden School District*	Dartmouth College intramurals
Oak Hill Reservoir Road	Dartmouth College	Cross country running and skiing Walking, mountain biking
Occom Pond	Dartmouth College	Ice skating, ice hockey
Storrs Pond Reservoir Road	Hanover Improvement Society	Swimming, tennis, basketball, summer camp, camping, picnicking, walking, cross country skiing, mountain biking

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