

I. RECREATION

Goal To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.



Opportunities for Recreation

Jonesport has several indoor municipal recreational facilities and the town's vast natural resources provide numerous recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Open space includes shore frontage, forestlands, wetlands, athletic fields, and a seasonal skating rink. Although much of the open space is not

accessible to the public, as the regional population rises, development pressures on all open space will certainly increase. Accessible open space including ball fields, wildlife refuges, and parks are outlined in this section.

Existing recreational facilities and programs in the community and region

Although the population of Jonesport is not expected to grow dramatically over the next 10 – 15 years, the town is anticipating a slight population increase related to the construction and operation of a land-based aquaculture facility that proposes to break ground in 2023/2024. This application is still under appeal, no permits have been issued. Jonesport recognizes that existing local recreational opportunities may not be sufficient to accommodate anticipated growth and the desires of current and future residents. Along with other Maine communities, Jonesport has seen a slight increase in population since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some new and long-term residents have restricted traditional access to lands and shorefronts and look to the town to provide bike/ped access and other amenities. Jonesport also recognizes that there are pressures on the Sawyer Cove marina to accommodate recreational and commercial use. The anticipated population increase due to the construction and operation of the aquaculture facility will only exacerbate these pressures and increase the demand for recreational opportunities. Improved bike/ped access, particularly along the Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway (Route 187) and a dedicated commercial waterfront are necessary in order to relieve conflicting pressures while encouraging tourism, recreation, and economic development.

Need for services, facilities, or upgrades

Jonesport has always been and remains a vital part of Maine's fishing economy. In 1972, a recreational boat ramp was installed at Sawyer Cove with funding provided by the former "State Parks and Recreation Commission" known as the Bureau of Parks and Lands. The facility received improvements over the years including floats, piles, gangways, and ramp extensions.

Commercial vessels also utilize the Sawyer Cove recreational ramp with the knowledge of the State, but such use causes congestion between recreational and commercial use and recreational use is the priority use type. Parking facilities are extremely limited and sometimes force drivers to use on-street parking in a residential neighborhood. Commercial trucks and trailers can impede passage of emergency vehicles and residential traffic and reduces the ability for recreational users to access the facilities to remove the conflict between recreational facilities and prevent closure of commercial use allowance. Jonesport is in dire need of a dedicated working waterfront and associated infrastructure. The town has begun work on a commercial pier at Henry Point, adjacent to the municipally owned campground.

Jonesport also recognizes the local and regional demand for bike/ped access along Route 187. Currently the shoulders are gravel and sand which prohibits safe access for bicyclists and pedestrians alike. The Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway runs along Route 187 and through downtown Jonesport. The Bikeway is increasingly promoted at a national level and is seeing increased use by traveling cyclists, setting up all road users for potentially dangerous conditions. The town is open to public-private partnership discussions with MDOT and funding entities regarding improvements to the shoulders on Route 187 to accommodate the Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway and other bike/ped access.

The town needs sidewalk improvements in the downtown and residential areas to ensure access to pedestrians.

Jonesport has undertaken an engineering study and plan to improve the town “ball diamond” which was a gift to the town in 1947. Although the town’s Recreation Committee stopped meeting due to Covid-19, in 2022 there are plans for the committee to resume work on improvements to the “ball diamond.”

These examples are reflective of current needs for both recreational and commercial opportunities.

Ownership of important tracts of open space

Jonesport offers a variety of opportunities for observing wildlife including moose, bobcats, wading birds, amphibians, and coyote on publicly owned lands. Jonesport schools open their gymnasiums for indoor recreation such as basketball and walking and the town actively supports use of publicly owned property to encourage ice skating, sledding, recreational boating, ball games, community events, and camping. Sandy River Beach and picnic area (further described below) is municipally owned and Great Wass Island Preserve in neighboring Beals is permanently conserved by The Nature Conservancy.

Mechanisms to acquire important open spaces and access sites

Jonesport recognizes the importance of open spaces and access sites and has moved independently to acquire sites of local importance.

In 2019 Jonesport purchased a seven-acre tract of land known as Henry Point (locally known as “the campground.”) For decades the site had been leased by the town to allow water access, recreational opportunities, and shorefront access for harvesters of sea worms, periwinkles, and quahogs. In consideration of the possible overuse of the Sawyer Cove recreational ramp and the need for a dedicated working waterfront, Jonesport purchased the Henry Point site with the intention of preserving recreational use and permanent accommodations for commercial fishing. The town is currently in the process of collaborating with Land for Maine’s Future to ensure Henry Point remains, in perpetuity, conserved for working waterfront. Jonesport also wishes to adapt Henry Point to ensure resiliency to climate change including, but not limited to sea level rise; erosion; protection of historic and archaeological resources; and open access recreational and traditional working waterfront activities. Jonesport is pleased to consider partnering with agencies with the same goals as the community and harvesters.

Public access to significant water bodies

Jonesport has diligently worked to preserve and create public access to surface waters although not all locations are easily accessible or safe for entry to beaches or shorefront. Sawyer Cove Marina is easily accessible and regularly maintained. There are nearly 100 moorings and slips for commercial and recreational boats.

In 2012, the town also purchased a lot across from Sandy River Beach (Chandler Bay) to accommodate parking for commercial harvesters and recreational beachgoers. The lot provides parking, a hand carry boat launch, picnic tables, barbecue grills, seasonal personal facilities, and direct access to the shorefront. It should be noted that Jonesport only owns a 50-foot right of way to the beach and the remainder of shore access is currently allowed by private landowners.

Jonesport includes several beautiful islands with beaches of various sizes and compositions. Some of the islands are managed by conservation groups and the state; some such as Head Harbor are open for picnicking and hiking.

Trail maintenance

Recreational trails are adequately maintained, however there is a need for sidewalk improvements to ensure safe pedestrian access. There are no significant conflicts currently.

Traditional access to private lands

While several landowners accept foot travel for those seeking shore and water access, knowledge of these areas are by word of mouth and the public is trusted in these cases to observe common courtesies relating to parking, treatment of the property and obtaining permission from the landowner. However, many private landowners increasingly restrict public access, especially as new residents move to the area, and there are landowners who dispute the ownership of some waterfront areas, but the locations are not conducive to shorefront access due to drop offs that can be as much as 30 feet.

Important public and private active recreation programs, recreation areas

Jonesport offers a variety of recreational opportunities that are funded and maintained by the town as well as a wide array of opportunities funded through the non-profit Peabody Memorial Library. The Town just approved money to support the 4th of July Summerfest, one of annual two festivals organized by volunteers and funded through donations.

Aside from boating and saltwater fishing, Jonesport has purchased land to accommodate those who wish to visit Sandy River Beach on Chandler Bay. Picnicking, recreational shellfish harvesting, a hand carry boat launch, ample parking, and the willingness of private landowners to allow additional beach access makes the location a site of significance. Jonesport has a seasonal ice-skating pond complete with a warming hut and lights for night skating. The town maintains an area for winter sledding. In warmer months, Jonesport provides camping at Henry Point where campers have access to shorefront, fire pits, and permanent bathroom facilities. Campers are asked for a donation to “pay as they are able.” The town purchased Henry Point with plans for a working waterfront and the intention of reserving approximately 40 % of the property for camping sites which has been a site of significance in Jonesport for nearly 100 years. For those who can visit Mistake Island, located five miles offshore, there are opportunities to explore the island as well as the opportunity to visit the historically significant Moose Peak lighthouse. The current tower was built in 1851 and is still in operation; travelers should know that Mistake Island is one of the foggiest areas in Maine.¹

Jonesport is and always will be a fishing village. Lobster, crab, quahogs, sea worms, and periwinkles are just a few of the options for recreational harvesters.

ATVs and snowmobiling are generally confined to sites with permission from landowners as there are no public trail systems located within Jonesport however cycling has taken on great local interest after the town served as a host community for BikeMaine in 2016. The community survey located in Appendix A bears witness to the local desire for bike/ped shoulders along Route 187 to provide safe access and encourage economic development.

Jonesport boasts tennis courts with evening lighting, sports fields, and basketball courts. The local schools open their playgrounds and gymnasiums to residents for recreation. It should be noted that the town recreation committee has been inactive due to the Covid-19 pandemic but there are plans to reconvene the committee in 2022.

Peabody Memorial Library sponsors activities for children, art and music programming, book clubs and “meet the author” series. The library supports a teen advisory group to encourage young adults to take a role in library offerings.

¹ <https://www.history.uscg.mil/Browse-by-Topic/Assets/Land/All/Article/1963410/moose-peak-light/>
Accessed December 27, 2021.

Jonesport hosts two festivals a year: Summerfest which takes place over the July 4th holiday and “Winter Fest” which occurs in early December. Summerfest is committee run and is an all-American tribute to the birth of our nation complete with parades, fireworks, community lobster bake, horseshoe tournaments, public entertainment, lobster boat races, arm wrestling, and a “kids’ day” which is held at the town “ball diamond.” “Winter Fest”, also run by committee, celebrates the oncoming winter season with fireworks, parades, and a free community supper. The festivals have tremendous local support and are well attended by the community and residents from surrounding towns.

Jonesport is proud to be a part of the 147-mile Bold Coast National Scenic Byway and been a host community to BikeMaine

The 147-mile Bold Coast National Scenic Byway extends from Milbridge to Calais. The Byway runs along Route 187 through the heart of Jonesport and is widely promoted at the local, regional, state, and national level. The Byway brings travelers to experience the incredible natural, cultural, historic, and recreational assets of the region, including those described within this chapter and the entire document.

Program or Facility	Condition of Existing Facility	Description of Facility or Conditions
Volunteer Base	Some committees have been inactive since 2020 due to Covid-19	Plans to reactivate the recreation committee in 2023. Strong community engagement for recreational activities.
Community-wide Special Events	Strong community engagement and well received by the region	July 4 th (“Summerfest”) and “Winter Fest” Organized by committees with seasonal activities including parades, fireworks, community suppers, and entertainment.
Sawyer Cove Marina	Very good	The marina is a state-owned boat ramp for recreational users. Due to pressures related to commercial fishing, those utilizing the marina for recreational purposes may face extended wait times to launch their craft. Unmet Needs: technical assistance and infrastructure grants to help accommodate the proposed working waterfront at Henry Point.

Arts/Crafts/Music	Geared toward adults, teens, and younger children; well received by the community	Hosted by the Peabody Memorial Library. Non-profit (the Town contributes funds annually). Hosts a wide array of free public events including art, music, book clubs, and programming for teens and younger children. Unmet Needs: none currently but state funding is vital for the continuation of libraries and programming of the arts.
Multi-purpose field	Good condition	Soccer fields and ball diamonds are located behind the elementary and high schools and are maintained through appropriations at town meetings.
Tennis Courts	In need of upgrading	Has lighting for evening games and community support for upgrades. Engineering study performed. Unmet needs: tennis courts were installed through grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Many of Maine's smallest communities utilized the grant funds during the 1990s but lack the financial capacity to maintain or replace the courts.
Ice skating/sledding	Fair to good condition	Town owns and maintains sledding area and seasonal skating pond which has lighting and a warming hut
Playgrounds	Excellent	The schools are consolidated between Jonesport and Beals Island. The communities regularly upgrade playground equipment. Facilities are open to the public outside of school hours
Indoor Facilities	Excellent	The elementary and high school offer indoor access for walking, basketball, weightlifting, and other indoor activities. Unmet needs: Jonesport is in dire need of accessible sidewalks to allow for bike/ped access. Route 187 lacks shoulders which prohibits safe routes for biking and pedestrians.
Auditorium	Excellent	Offers a stage and is used regularly for town meetings, budget hearings, and other public meetings. Available to rent for stage entertainment, private parties, and other special events.
Picnic/camping areas	Very good	Camping is available at Henry Point and includes permanent bathroom facilities. Picnicking, grilling, seasonal bathroom facilities, and ample parking is available at the town owned lot adjacent to Sandy River Beach. Private landowners allow extended beach access. Unmet needs: Sawyer Cove Marina was installed by the state for recreational boating. Jonesport has a very large

		<p>fleet of commercial fishing vessels and landings are among Maine’s highest for lobster. Currently commercial vessels cannot access water without the use of the recreational Marina. In response to increasing pressures, Jonesport has purchased a seven-acre property to create a dedicated working waterfront. In 2018 Jonesport engaged a firm for engineering a commercial boat launch and moorings for the commercial fleet. The town is currently in the process of working with Land for Maine’s Future to ensure the site remains, in perpetuity, designated for a working waterfront and recreational access.</p>
<p>Finance for operation and maintenance</p>		<p>Funds are raised in appropriations at the town meeting. Jonesport fully supports recreation and provides opportunities within the reach of taxpayers. Basic infrastructure such as shoulders along Route 187 as well as ADA compliant sidewalks are out of the reach of a community of approximately 1200 without state/federal assistance.</p>

Regional Recreational Opportunities

Regional recreation facilities accessible to Jonesport 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:

Great Wass Island Preserve between Jonesport and Beals: 1576 acres of boreal forest, peat bogs, and coastline managed by the Nature Conservancy.

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.

Cutler Coast Public Reserved Land, Bold Coast Trails: maintained by the State, contains ten miles of hiking trails and three walk-in campsites.

Ingersoll Point Preserve in Addison: 145 acres and 3.5 miles of trails and 1.6 miles of shoreline.

East Plummer Island Preserve (Addison) and the Mistake Island Preserve (Jonesport): both managed by the Nature Conservancy.

East Quoddy Lighthouse and Mulholland Lighthouse in Campobello, N.B.

Tibbett Island in Addison: accessible by small craft including kayaks; 23 acres of forest and open space.

Herring Cove Provincial Park, Campobello, N.B: golf course, campground, playground, beach, hiking trails.

Jonesboro Wildlife Management Area: 698 acres.

Jasper Beach in Buck's Harbor, Machiasport; more than 2600 feet of pebble beach backed by salt and freshwater lagoons and wetlands.



Great Wass Island Preserve. Photo: nature.org

Downeast Sunrise Trail: multi-use trail system runs from Ayers Junction to Ellsworth. Connects to East Coast Greenway stretching all the way to Florida.

Machias Seal Island, seabird nesting site with puffin colony, boat tours from Jonesport and Cutler.

Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge: 16,000 acres west of Calais, 6,700 acres in Edmunds. Migratory birds, big game and 50 miles of trails.

Petit Manan National Wildlife Refuge in Steuben: 3,335 acres on the mainland with hiking trails, several islands, and a variety of birds.

Cobscook Shores in Lubec offers 15 waterfront parks with access to miles of hiking trails and shoreline, dozens of beaches, and campsites.

Quoddy Head State Park in Lubec: 532 acres, easternmost point in the U.S., high rocky cliffs with extensive walking trails and views of Canada. The park features 4.5 miles of hiking trails, extensive forests, two bogs, diverse habitat for rare plants, and the red-and-white striped lighthouse tower of West Quoddy Head Light.

Roque Bluffs State Park: 274 acres; 2300-foot beach, picnic tables, grills, six miles of trails and children's playground.

Public water access

Although there is adequate access to the surface waters in Jonesport, some private landowners dispute rights to some traditional/locally known shoreline rights of way. Because of safety reasons, the town does not wish to claim rights or allow public use due to the general inaccessibility related to drop-offs as high as 30 feet which could cause serious injury or death to those seeking to utilize access posted as public. The town does recognize that appropriate signage could direct users to public access points.

Local and regional trail systems

Jonesport does not have local trails for all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) or snowmobiles. Cross country skiing and snowshoeing are allowed on some privately owned lands with permission from the landowners. Within Washington County there are well maintained networks for off road use of both ATVs and snowmobiles including the Down East Sunrise Trail, which provides 87 miles of trails open to recreational vehicles and is also open to bicycles, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and horseback riding, and hikers. The Down East Sunrise Trail is the longest trail

on the East Coast Greenway which connects 15 states through over 3,000 miles of corridors stretching from Maine to Florida.

There are numerous trails in Washington County that are managed by local snowmobile and ATV clubs through partnerships with private landowners.

Publicly used open spaces and associated facilities

Jonesport-Beals schools provide recreational opportunities to the public including indoor gyms, sports fields, and playgrounds. Ample parking and permanent restroom facilities.



Sawyer Cove Marina offers a recreational boat ramp, limited parking, and seasonal restroom facilities.



Henry Point, a town-owned seven-acre parcel provides camping, shore access, ample parking, and year-round restroom facilities. Camping is offered for a “pay you are able” fee. Pending funding, Jonesport plans to use approximately 60% of the area for a commercial pier and maintain the remaining area as a campground.



Policies and Implementation Strategies

Policy	Implementation Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
Public Access			
Maintain and upgrade existing recreational facilities	Develop a plan to meet current and future recreational needs; explore ways to identify needs.	Planning Board, Select Board	Short Term (Within 2 – 5 years)
Upgrade existing facilities to accommodate for climate adaptation	Identify areas in need of protection from flooding and erosion and develop plans to minimize loss and damage	Select Board	Immediate
Continue to maintain and increase public access to surface waters	Work with agencies and regional partners to assist the town with funding commercial piers and landings	Select Board	Short Term Within 2 – 5 years)
Secure public access to traditional shellfish harvesting areas	Pursue the wide variety of available measures to secure such accesses including landowner negotiations, cooperating with local land trusts, accepting donations of easements or land, use of Land for Maine’s Future funds	Selectboard	Ongoing
Preserve Open Space	Continue to enforce major new residential developments to present recreational and open space areas in their plans	Selectboard, Planning Board	Ongoing
	Work with local conservation organizations to protect open space or recreational lands	Selectboard	Ongoing
Education	Develop educational materials describing uses and practices including issues such as shore access, hunting, working waterfront, commercial fishing, and community institutions.	Selectboard	Short Term (Within 2 – 5 years)
	Provide educational materials regarding benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property	Selectboard, Planning Board, Town Clerk	Short Term Within 2 – 5 years)



This sculpture pays homage to Jonesport's history inextricably tied to the sea.