

Section XI Recreation

Introduction

The Lake Sunapee Region provides for numerous recreational opportunities, including Mount Sunapee with its winter skiing and summer hiking, and Lake Sunapee with boating, fishing, swimming and other water-related activities. There are also numerous other seasonal town activities including the Fourth of July fireworks, biking and running races, the Chowder Challenge, and concerts in the Harbor.

The Town of Sunapee Recreation Department promotes youth sports, trips to sporting events, and ice skating. The Department also oversees the operation of the Town's two beaches in Sunapee Harbor and Georges Mills and provides numerous recreation-related training programs.

Survey Results

Results of the Master Plan survey showed that over 40% of respondents rated "outdoor recreation activities" as one of the top reasons they liked the Town of Sunapee. In a question asking what recreational activities the respondents' family would use if made available, over 76% answered "hiking trails" and over 58% indicated cross-country skiing. Approximately one in three respondents to this question listed a sledding park and tennis courts among their preferences.

In a question related to the future use of the Old Town Hall building, nearly 52% of respondents (the highest number by 2:1 over the next choice), indicated that the building should be used as a community building. This could help fulfill some of the town's recreation needs.

Recreation Committee

The Town Recreation Committee is comprised of seven town residents. The committee oversees the work of a part-time Recreation Director.

During a public input session on the Master Plan, the Director stated that the prime need for the Recreation Department is more athletic field space. Other needs included a better skating area and a new skateboard park. It was noted that there are about 150 participants in various programs for children in Kindergarten through Grade 6 and that over 100 people per day use Dewey Beach.

A survey by the Recreation Department showed that many residents were interested in a new recreation building to supplement the existing recreation (gym) space in town which is heavily used, especially during winter months. This new building would serve not only children but residents of all ages.

Recommendations

1. Create additional athletic field space.

Develop existing town-owned land or acquire new land for the purpose of creating additional recreation fields. A site should be chosen which will offer the opportunity for mixed recreational activities.

2. Plan for a Recreation Building.

A site should be chosen which will provide good access for children after school hours and also be available to residents of all ages. Ideally, any existing building should be large enough to allow for a gym since the existing school gyms are used to capacity. It is recommended that a site selection process be undertaken which is similar in scope to that used to find a library site.