

# **Otisfield Comprehensive Plan Update**



***Bell Hill Meeting House***

**June 25, 2011**

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# **I**ntroduction

The citizens of Otisfield adopted a comprehensive plan in 2004, and it has not been evaluated or amended since then. This plan presents information on community and regional trends and characteristics over the past 10 to 20 years and what is expected to occur over the next 10 years.

The cornerstone or most important elements of the comprehensive plan are the policies and strategies which the community adopts. They present the directions the community will take to address issues identified in the Inventory and Analysis element of the plan. Policies are statements of direction the community desires to take, and strategies define specific actions the Town should undertake in order to carry out the directions contained in the policies.

**The Comprehensive Plan, presented in two parts--Goals, Policies, & Strategies and the Inventory and Analysis--**serves as a guide for the community and town officials as they make decisions about the future of Otisfield. The Plan suggests general directions, recognizing that specific details will require further efforts. The Plan should be considered a living document, meaning that it will require review and revisions as Otisfield and the region changes over time.

The Plan is, however, intended to guide future changes in the Town's land use regulations so that they will reflect the goals and policies of this Plan. Similarly, the discussions of capital needs and spending priorities are intended as general guides, not specific proposals.

**Strategies or actions to carry out the plan have been identified as short-, mid- or long-term.** This refers to the time frame that the plan recommends for actions to occur. Short-term actions should occur within one to two years of plan adoption, mid-term three to five years from plan adoption and long-term six to ten years from plan adoption. Those that should be responsible for undertaking the strategies are also identified.

The Otisfield Comprehensive Plan Update Committee has thoroughly considered each and every one of the policies and strategies and assessed its implications. In addition, it relied heavily on what the residents of Otisfield told the Committee at visioning sessions held in the summer of 2010. Although, in not all instances did the committee unanimously agree, it is the position of the Committee that the following presents a realistic direction for Otisfield over the next 10 years.

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# **Otisfield Comprehensive Plan Update**

## **Part I**

- A Vision for Otisfield-**
- Goals, Policies, Strategies-**
- Future Land Use Plan-**
- Regional Coordination Program-**
- Plan Implementation-**
- Plan Evaluation-**
- Public Participation Summary-**



## ***Vision for Otisfield***

***Based on the 2004 Plan Update and Town Visioning Session Held on July 8, 2010.***

### ***Character and Special Places***

Rural character, lakes, ponds, Crooked River and streams and good volunteer spirit are some of the important characteristics liked by those that live in and visit Otisfield. There is a good mix of townspeople that include natives, recent transplants and summer residents and visitors. People generally feel safe in Otisfield unlike those in many larger communities. The Community School, active churches and caring neighbors help define the social character of Otisfield. Large tracts of undeveloped land, large house lots, two lane roads and the lack of street lights help to create a small town atmosphere. With no historic real downtown area, Otisfield has not had to deal with obsolete rental property and/or decaying mill buildings. Well kept historic buildings, former village locations, old cemeteries and stone walls are reminders of Otisfield's past.

Otisfield is still a small Maine town. People work hard, support their neighbors, maintain their homes and take pride in their small share of Maine's natural beauty.

Municipal facilities and government are working well with knowledge that changes will be needed in the future. There is overall community pride and involvement as seen in the efforts to rehabilitate the Community Hall, Bell Hill Meeting House (Bell Hill Church) and Old Town House.

Physical special places are important to those who reside in Otisfield, year-round or seasonally. These include the waters of Moose Pond, Pleasant Lake, Saturday Pond, Thompson Lake and Crooked River. The many scenic views are other special features including views from Peaco Hill, Scribner Hill, Cobb Hill and Bell Hill. Heniger Park, hiking trails, wildlife and clean air are other features. All of these lead to a beautiful area known as Otisfield.

### ***Current Trends***

Otisfield has seen steady growth in year-round population over the last 30 years. This has been contrary to some nearby communities such as Norway, Oxford and Paris. New year-round residents have come to Otisfield for a number of reasons. Natural beauty, small town atmosphere, land availability and reasonable tax rate are some of the reasons. Over the next 10 years, population is expected to grow. In a few years, there will more residents older than 65 than less than 17 in Otisfield. Summer residents and visitors increase the population twofold, many staying at their second homes at the lakes and ponds and at Camp Arcadia and Seeds of Peace.

The importance of Norway, Oxford and Paris as places of employment has decreased in recent years. No longer do most people work in manufacturing jobs but jobs in education, health and social services. Workers are traveling further to places such as Auburn, Lewiston and Portland.

Otisfield has seen one of the highest rates of housing growth in the immediate area indicating the town is a desirable place to live. Since 2000, some 250 permits have been issued for new homes. The median priced home in Otisfield was affordable to the median income family during and after 2006. There are some 600 year-round homes and 400 homes used on a seasonal basis.

### ***Otisfield's Vision for the Future***

In the future, Otisfield will still be a small town that people live in because of its natural and social environments. These will be the primary reason for being here rather than for local employment. Until energy prices make it not possible, people that work will travel to near and far locations for their jobs or have small businesses run from their homes. Some businesses will have taken advantage of the many summer residents and visitors. Access to technology will be available to all that desire it. Efforts will have been made to create good jobs nearer to Otisfield. Services for the young and old will be found in both Otisfield and neighboring communities.

Otisfield will be the home of forward thinking, warm and friendly people. There will be a mixture of ages, young and old, and families with kids. Newcomers and seasonal residents will be welcomed as will their ideas and views. Summer residents will continue to be attracted to Otisfield and come to stay on the shores of our lakes and ponds.

There will be undeveloped areas consisting of large tracts of open space that maintain scenic views, wildlife habitats and other related important assets. These areas will not be the result of overly restrictive land use regulation but rather by their owner's free will or by other non regulatory methods. New growth and development will exhibit a planned approach, perhaps village locations, rather than lacking a "rhyme or reason."

Surface water will be of high quality and will attract both year-round and summer residents. The water quality of lakes and ponds will be high due to overall watershed management and lack of invasive species. The Crooked River corridor will be largely undeveloped and known for its great fishing and recreational values.

Public facilities and services will be provided to meet the needs of all age groups without excessive tax rates. Community buildings will have been maintained to retain their serviceability and function. Fire and police protection will serve the needs of the community which may be provided on a regional basis. The Community School with grades K-6 will be a focal point of Otisfield. Heniger Park will have been developed based on a community supported master plan, and there will suitable access to each lake, pond and Crooked River. Government will be small. Landowners will not be overly regulated, but there will be sufficient standards to maintain valued qualities of the natural environment.

State and town roads will be in such condition that they are safe to travel and maintained at reasonable cost. Traffic that uses Routes 117 and 121 will not have created unsafe conditions for travelers, pedestrians and bicyclists. Local roads will be maintained and reconstructed based on coherent public policy with flexibility to address unforeseen emergencies.

The history of the town will be maintained through efforts of the historical society and well maintained cemeteries. Housing opportunities will exist for the elderly to stay in Otisfield if they so desire.

A new generation of public officials and town volunteers will have stepped forward to supplement or replace those that have helped make Otisfield the town that it is. Most of all, Otisfield will continue to be the "ideal town" with caring people that are safe and proud to live here.

# Goals, Policies, Strategies

## **PLANNING TOPIC      Archaeological, Historic and Cultural Resources**

### **State of Maine Goal that needs to be addressed:**

**To preserve the State's historic and archaeological resources.**

### **Policies of the Plan are to:**

#### *State policy required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.*

#### **Otisfield's policies**

Encourage preservation and maintenance of significant historic resources.

Encourage new development or redevelopment adjacent to a historic building(s) and sites to be compatible with the existing historic structure(s) and sites.

### **Strategies of the Plan are to:**

#### *State strategies required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Prepare amendments to ordinances to require for sites with identified potential for historical and archaeological resources that applicants proposing subdivisions or non-residential developments look for and identify any historical and archaeological resources and take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Planning Board/Short Term*

*Incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into the review of proposed subdivisions and non-residential development proposals.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Planning Board/Ongoing*

*Request the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary request grants for, a comprehensive community survey of the town's historic and archaeological resources.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen/Mid Term*

#### **Otisfield's strategies:**

Prepare amendments to the subdivision and site plan review ordinances to contain provisions that encourage, whenever possible, the retention of designated historic resources.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Planning Board/Short Term

Prepare Amendments to the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Ordinances to include provisions which prohibit incompatible uses adjacent to historic sites and buildings and encourage adjacent structures to be compatible with the design and scale of the historic structures.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Planning Board/Short

Identify and **seek** to register those historic and archeological resources suitable for listing on the National Registers of Historic Places.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Historical Society/Ongoing

Impose ordinance provisions to insure that incompatible development is discouraged where known or potential archaeological resources exist and that such resources are adequately protected.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Planning Board/Ongoing

Support the efforts of the Town, Otisfield Historical Society and Bell Hill Meetinghouse House Association to retain historic resources.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Selectmen /Ongoing

## **PLANNING TOPIC            Economy**

### **State of Maine Goal that needs to be addressed:**

**To promote an economic climate which increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.**

### **Policies of the Plan are to:**

*State policies required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Support the type of economic development activity the community desires, reflecting the community's role in the region.*

*If needed, make financial commitments to support desired economic development, including public infrastructure improvements.*

*Coordinate with regional development organizations and/or surrounding towns as necessary to support appropriate economic development.*

### **Otisfield's policies:**

Cooperate with towns in the region on economic development opportunities that improve the quantity and quality of jobs and improve the tax revenues to Otisfield.

Locate businesses of all types in areas which are appropriate for the intended use in order to:

- Protect the environment, natural resources, and water quality of Otisfield, neighboring towns and water resources that receive drainage from Otisfield,
- Insure that they are compatible with the character of abutting uses and existing nearby residential areas,
- Insure that they fit harmoniously with the town's identified rural character, and

- Insure that they do not create a burden on municipal facilities and services.

Provide for home-related businesses throughout the community, and to insure their compatibility with residential uses and existing abutting uses.

That broadband and cellular telephone service is available to enable businesses and individuals in Otisfield to connect with global markets.

Build upon the Otisfield's "quality of place" assets (water resources, open spaces, historic buildings/sites and the like) for businesses development.

### **Strategies of the Plan are to:**

#### ***State strategies required to address State of Maine Goal:***

*Financially support regional economic development activities/organizations provided they recognize Otisfield's goals.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Selectmen/Ongoing</i>
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*Prepare amendments to ordinances to reflect the desired scale, design, intensity, and location of future economic development and to maintain the quality of life.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Planning Board/Short Term</i>
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*Develop and adopt incentives suitable for the types and locations of economic development desired in the community.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Selectmen/Long Term</i>
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*Continue to participate in appropriate regional economic development efforts.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Selectmen/Ongoing</i>
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#### **Otisfield's strategies:**

Continue to cooperate with organizations and other towns in the region to develop appropriate regional economic development opportunities.

Responsibility/Time Frame	Selectmen/Ongoing
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Prepare amendments to the Site Plan Review Ordinance and other pertinent ordinances, as necessary, so that provisions regulating businesses consider impacts on existing municipal services, including roads, solid wastes and the character of the area.

Responsibility/Time Frame	Planning Board/Short Term
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Prepare amendments to the Site Plan Review Ordinance to provide for review of new and expanded residence based businesses using an abbreviated procedure to assure environmental compliance and good neighbor policies (noise, odor, light trespass and communication interference).

Responsibility/Time Frame	Planning Board/Short Term
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Seek upgrades to broadband, DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) and cellular services that keep up with advancing technology.

Responsibility/Time Frame	Selectmen/Short & Ongoing
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Develop background information that presents Otisfield's "quality of place" and tourism assets and provided to potential individuals and/businesses interested in locating and/or expanding in Otisfield.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Selectmen/Short & Ongoing

## **PLANNING TOPIC**

## **Housing/Affordable Housing**

### **State of Maine Goal that needs to be addressed:**

**To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.**

### **Policies of the Plan are to:**

#### *State policies required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Encourage and promote adequate workforce housing to support the community's and region's economic development.*

*Ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including rental housing.*

*Seek to achieve at least 10% of all housing built or placed during the next decade be affordable.*

*Encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.*

#### **Otisfield's policies**

Assure that residential structures are constructed safely and soundly.

Seek options for elderly to afford to stay in their homes and/or in Otisfield.

Manage the conversion of seasonal/second homes and/or seasonal camping sites to year-round.

### **Strategies of the Plan are to:**

#### *State strategies required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Assess the need to enact or amend land use regulations to increase density, decrease lot size, setbacks and road widths, or provide incentives such as density bonuses, in certain areas, to make housing less expensive to develop.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Mid Term*

*Do not enact ordinances that will not allow the addition of at least one accessory apartment per dwelling unit.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Ongoing*

*Support a regional affordable housing coalition.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen/Ongoing*

*Designate locations in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to State laws regulating mobile home parks.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Planning Board/Short Term*

**Otisfield's strategies:**

Assess the need/desire to locally enforce the Statewide Uniform Building, Energy and Rehabilitation Code.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Selectmen & Code Enforcement Officer/Mid Term

Support programs that aid the elderly to stay in their homes.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Selectmen Ongoing

Assess the need to amend land use ordinances to remove provisions, such as excessive lot size and road frontage, that can discourage development of elderly housing projects

Responsibility/Time Frame

Ordinance Policy Committee/Short Term

Assess the need to develop ordinance provisions that require that when the conversion of a home that is lived in on a seasonal basis and/or seasonal camping sites are changed to year-round living that sewage disposal is adequate, off-street parking is provided, municipal services are not adversely impacted.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Mid Term

**PLANNING TOPIC                      Transportation**

**State of Maine Goal that needs to address:**

**To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.**

**Policies of the Plan are to:**

*State policies required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.*

*Safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.*

*Promote public health, protect natural and cultural resources, and enhance livability by managing land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transportation system and minimize increases in vehicle miles traveled.*

*Meet the diverse transportation needs of residents (including children, the elderly and disabled) and through travelers by providing a safe, efficient, and adequate transportation network for all types of users (motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists).*

*Promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.*

#### **Otisfield's policies:**

Ensure that existing roads are maintained and improved in a cost effective manner so that they are capable of serving current and future uses.

Assure that new development takes place where transportation systems have the capacity to carry the increased traffic volume.

Ensure that pavement conditions and intersections onto Route 121 are safe.

Manage development that would be served by public roads that are in a condition to accommodate anticipated traffic to maintain public safety, and minimize increases in road improvement and maintenance costs.

That transit services are provided to those in need of such services.

That adequate off street parking is provided for commercial uses and public facilities.

#### **Strategies of the Plan are to:**

##### ***State strategies required to address State of Maine Goal:***

*Develop and maintain a prioritized ten-year improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for local/regional transportation system facilities that reflects community, regional, and state objectives.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Road Commissioner, Road Study Committee & Selectmen/Ongoing*

*Participate in regional and state transportation and land use planning efforts.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen/Ongoing*

*Prepare amendments to ordinances as appropriate to be consistent with local, regional, and state transportation policies identified in this plan.*

*Enact or amend land use ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:*

- *Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 MRSA §73);*
- *State access management regulations pursuant to 23 MRSA §704; and*
- *State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 MRSA §704-A.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Ongoing*

*Prepare amendments to land use ordinance standards as appropriate for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future connections.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Ordinance Policy Review Committee &  
Planning Board/Short Term*

*Work with the MaineDOT as appropriate to address deficiencies in the system or conflicts between local, regional, and state priorities for the local transportation system.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen/Ongoing*

#### **Otisfield's strategies:**

Appoint a Road Advisory Committee, as a Standing Committee, to prepare a Road Improvement Program and provide such other input to the Road Commissioner and Selectmen as they deem necessary.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Selectmen/Short Term

Request the MaineDOT to include pavement and intersection improvements to Route 121 in their Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Selectmen/Short Term & Ongoing

Prepare amendments to the subdivision ordinance to include provisions that subdivisions proposed to be accessed by roads closed to winter maintenance and/or roads deemed to be inadequate to carry the traffic associated with subdivisions be prohibited unless road improvements are undertaken by the subdivider.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Ordinance Policy Review Committee  
& Planning Board/Short Term

Seek commitments from Western Maine Transportation Services and/or Community Concepts to provide Otisfield with transit services.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Selectmen/Short Term & Ongoing

Work with local business to improve off-street parking.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Selectmen/Ongoing

## **PLANNING TOPIC**

### **Outdoor Recreation**

#### **State of Maine goal Plan that needs to address:**

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

## **Policies of the Plan are to:**

### ***State policies required to address State of Maine Goal:***

*Maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.*

*Preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.*

*Seek to achieve or continue to maintain and improve at least one major point of public access to each of the major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.*

### **Otisfield's policies:**

Provide needed additional recreational opportunities in the community.

Ensure that new development does not threaten to degrade or remove existing recreation facilities.

Encourage large landowners to continue to allow the public to use their land for hunting, hiking and snowmobiling and other passive recreation activities.

Optimize recreational values of Heniger Park.

That users of ATVs, on private and public land by the general public, are respectful of the land, environment, roads and people.

## **Strategies of the Plan are to:**

### ***State strategies required to address State of Maine Goal:***

*Create a list of recreation needs and explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in this plan.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Recreation Committee/Short Term & Ongoing*

*Include any capital needs identified for recreation facilities in the Capital Investment Plan.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen & Finance Committee/Short Term & Ongoing*

*Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Snowmobile Club/Ongoing.*

*Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organization to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Conservation Committee/Ongoing*

*Provide education regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Snowmobile Club/Ongoing.*

### **Otisfield's strategies:**

Prepare amendments to ordinances as necessary to include provisions that encourage new development to retain existing recreational opportunities and facilities including trails.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Ordinance Policy Review Committee &  
Planning Board/Short Term

Where possible, through ordinances and other means, the town should encourage the establishment of greenbelts, parks and open spaces and trails.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Planning Board & Conservation  
Committee/Ongoing

Undertake measures to acquire, improve, and maintain continual access to the town's lakes, ponds and the Crooked River for recreational activity. Include in the Capital Improvement Plan cost for acquisition of new and expanded areas and improvements to existing areas and facilities. Note: The town should consider land swaps and soliciting donations as means of obtaining suitable lands.

Develop a Heniger Park Management Plan that includes recreation improvements, management responsibilities and costs.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Selectmen & Advisory Committee/Short Term

Support efforts of local/regional ATV Clubs to encourage respectful use of private and public lands.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Selectmen/Ongoing

### **PLANNING TOPIC**

### **Water Resources**

### **State of Maine goal Plan that needs to address:**

**To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds and rivers.**

### **Policies of the Plan are to:**

#### *State policies required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Protect current and potential drinking water sources.*

*Protect significant surface water resources from pollution and improve water quality where needed.*

*Protect water resources in growth areas while promoting more intensive development in those areas.*

*Cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.*

**Otisfield's policies:**

Maintain and improve the surface water quality of individual lakes, ponds, and rivers,

Maintain the Crooked River's high values which include scenic, fishery, and recreation resources.

New or expanded development in lake/pond watersheds is conducted in such a manner that water quality is protected.

Manage development along shorelines of brooks and streams so that water quality is maintained.

Protect ground water resources.

Minimize the threat of invasive aquatic species into surface waters.

***State strategies required to address State of Maine Goal:***

*Amend land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with:*

*Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 MRSA §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502).*

*Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Short Term*

*Update as needed the Floodplain Management and Shoreland Zoning Ordinances to be consistent with state and/or federal standards.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Ongoing*

*Consider the need to amend land use ordinances to incorporate low impact development standards.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Short Term*

*Enact public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms, as necessary.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Mid Term*

*Provide water quality "best management practices" information to farmers and loggers.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Conservation Committee/Ongoing*

*Adopt water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public roads and properties and require their use.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen & Road Commissioner/Short Term & Ongoing*

*Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Conservation Committee & Lake Associations/Ongoing*

*Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Conservation Committee & Lake Associations/Ongoing*

**Otisfield's strategies:**

Prepare amendments to the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance to include a Resource Protection District adjacent to the Crooked River so that the water quality, recreation, fisheries and scenic values of the river are maintained. The Resource Protection District should extend to the extent of the 100-year floodplain in non-developed areas.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Short Term

Include in all land use ordinances provisions for strict erosion and sedimentation control standards, water quality protection, and storm water management features.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Short Term

Prepare amendments to the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Ordinances to reflect updated phosphorous control methodologies and export limits.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Ongoing

Prepare amendments to the Subdivision, Site Plan Review, and Building Code Ordinances to require natural buffers, at a minimum of 75 feet wide on each side of the stream, adjacent to all perennial streams.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Short Term

Place undeveloped 100-year floodplains in the Resource Protection District of the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Ongoing

Prepare ordinance standards to minimize phosphorus export from single lot development in lake/pond watersheds.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Short Term

Provide inspection of erosion and sediment control measures during development construction.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Code Officer/Ongoing

## **PLANNING TOPIC**

## **Critical Natural Resources**

### **State of Maine goal Plan that needs to address:**

**To protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.**

### **Policies of the Plan are to:**

#### *State policies required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Conserve critical natural resources in the community.*

*Coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.*

#### **Otisfield's policies:**

Protect wetlands from being altered or from encroachment so that their benefits and values are maintained.

Assure that development and other activities upon steep slopes are undertaken in such a manner so as to minimize environmental degradation and municipal costs.

Insure that development does not cause erosion of soils or degrade the ability of the land to hold water.

Protect areas identified by the Maine Natural Areas Program as Rare or Endangered Natural Areas.

That development and other activities in significant scenic areas be undertaken in such a manner as to minimize any obstruction of views and interruption of scenic vistas.

Maintain wildlife resources through habitat preservation and/or enhancement.

Maintain a cold water sport fishery.

Identify significant vernal pools.

### **Strategies of the Plan are to:**

#### *State strategies required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Prepare amendments to land use ordinances, to require subdivision or non-residential property developers to look for and identify critical natural resources, (shoreland areas, large habitat blocks, wetlands, significant wildlife and fisheries spawning habitats, plant species that are threatened or endangered, floodplains) as defined in Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, that may be on site and to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Ordinance Policy Review Committee &amp; Planning Board/Short Term</i>
<i>Prepare amendments to land use ordinances to require the planning board to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Beginning with Habitat program into their review process.</i>	
<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Ordinance Policy Review Committee &amp; Planning Board/Short Term</i>
<i>Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical natural resources.</i>	
<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Committee, Western Foot Hills Land Trust, Nature Conservancy, &amp; Upper Headwaters Alliance/Ongoing</i>
<i>Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.</i>	
<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Selectmen, Conservation Committee, Western Foot Hills Land Trust, Nature Conservancy, &amp; Upper Headwaters Alliance/Ongoing</i>
<i>Make available, at the town office, information to those living in or near critical natural resources about applicable local, state, or federal regulations.</i>	
<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Town Office Staff/Ongoing</i>

**Otisfield's strategies:**

Continue to include high and moderate value water fowl and wading bird habitat wetlands and adjacent buffer areas in a Resource Protection District.

Responsibility/Time Frame	Planning Board/Ongoing
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Continue to require that proposed developments adjacent to wetlands maintain an undisturbed buffer area.

Responsibility/Time Frame	Planning Board/Ongoing
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Prepare amendments to the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Ordinances to provide for natural buffers adjacent to wetlands in order to protect their environmental benefits and values on each side of the Stream, adjacent to all perennial streams. Buffers may range from 10 to 150 feet or more and should be based on the characteristics and values of the wetland. This should not be construed to prevent the filling of incidental wetlands providing hydrologic changes caused by such filling are mitigated.

Responsibility/Time Frame	Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Short Term
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Prepare amendments to the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Ordinances to include provisions that require development on steeper slopes (greater than 20%) to retain trees and other natural vegetation to stabilize hillsides, and to reduce erosion, siltation and runoff.

Responsibility/Time Frame	Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Short Term
Prepare amendments to the Building Ordinance to contain requirements for both temporary and permanent erosion control measures on individual house lots and other structures covered by the ordinance.	
Responsibility/Time Frame	Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board/Short Term
Seek conservation easements or similar methods to maintain significant scenic areas.	
Responsibility/Time Frame	Selectmen & Western Foot Hills Land Trust/Ongoing
Assess need and options to develop ridgeline development standards.	
Responsibility/Time Frame	Ordinance Policy Review Committee & Planning Board /Mid Term
Support the efforts of the Conservation Committee to identify and map significant vernal pools.	
Responsibility/Time Frame	Selectmen/Ongoing

## **PLANNING TOPIC                      Agricultural and Forest Resources**

### **State of Maine goal Plan that needs to address:**

**To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.**

### **Policies of the Plan are to:**

#### ***State policies required to address State of Maine Goal:***

*Safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.*

*Promote the use of best management practices for timber harvesting and agricultural production.*

*Support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.*

### **Otisfield's policies:**

Safeguard the forestland, open space, and agricultural land from inappropriate development which may threaten those resources.

Encourage forest management that will maintain the economic, recreational, and aesthetic values of the forestland.

## **Strategies of the Plan are to:**

### ***State strategies required to address State of Maine Goal:***

*Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester should any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices be considered in the future.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Planning Board & Ordinance Policy Review Committee/Ongoing*

*Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff should any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices be considered in the future.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Planning Board & Ordinance Policy Review Committee/Ongoing*

*Prepare amendments to the subdivision and site plan review ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments in significant farmland locations to maintain areas with prime farm soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Planning Board & Ordinance Policy Review Committee /Short Term*

*Prepare provisions that limit non-residential development in significant farmland and forestland locations, high-value wildlife or fisheries habitat and identified scenic areas to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Planning Board & Ordinance Policy Review Committee /Mid Term*

*Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs (Tree Growth and Farm and Open Space).*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen/Ongoing*

*Prepare amendments to ordinances, if needed, to not restrict activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, and pick-your-own operations.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Planning Board & Ordinance Policy Review Committee /Short Term*

*Include agriculture and commercial forestry operations in local or regional economic development plans.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Economic Development Groups & AVCOG/Ongoing*

### **Otisfield's strategies:**

*Develop a program to educate landowners on taking advantage of conservation programs to preserve undeveloped land.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Land Trusts/Ongoing*

## **PLANNING TOPIC**

## **Public Facilities and Services**

### **State of Maine goal Plan that needs to address:**

**To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.**

### **Policies of the Plan are to:**

#### *State policies required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Efficiently meet identified public facility and service needs.*

*Provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports growth and development in identified growth areas.*

### **Otisfield's policies:**

Plan for and oversee the finances of the town to insure fiscal accountability and efficiency.

Maintain the paid call fire department so it will be responsive to resident's needs and not overburden municipal finances.

Include the fire and road department facilities and equipment improvements in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Develop a sound relationship between the community and the school system so as to provide a K-6 grade local school and services such as a library and recreational access.

Provide a cost effective government that serves the citizens and property owners efficiently and effectively, and

Provide for town facilities and services that are adequate to efficiently and effectively operate town government, and serve the year-round and seasonal residents and landowners in Otisfield.

To impartially and strictly enforce land use and building ordinances and assure that new construction and renovations conform to acceptable building practices.

### **Strategies of the Plan are to:**

#### *State strategies required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Identify capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate the community's anticipated growth and changing demographics*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Departments, Selectmen & Finance Committee/  
Ongoing*

*Locate any new public facilities comprising at least 75% of any new municipal growth-related capital investments in areas designated for growth.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen/Ongoing*

*Continue and explore additional options for regional delivery of local services.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen/Ongoing*

**Otisfield's strategies:**

Maintain a Capital Improvement planning process.

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen & Finance Committee/Ongoing*

**PLANNING TOPIC**

**Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan**

**State of Maine goal Plan that needs to address:**

**To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.**

**Policies of the Plan are to:**

*State policies required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner.*

*Explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community.*

*Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas in the Future Land Use Plan.*

*Reduce Maine's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.*

**Strategies of the Plan are to:**

*State strategies required to address State of Maine Goal:*

*Implement the capital investment plan by maintaining the capital improvement program.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen & Finance Committee/Ongoing*

*Review and/or update the capital improvement program annually.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen & Finance  
Committee/Ongoing*

*Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen/Ongoing*

## Capital Investment Plan

Listed below are the significant capital investments which are expected over the next ten years identified during the comprehensive planning process. Individual items represent necessary equipment replacement/upgrading, facility improvements and investments necessitated by projected growth. The amounts of the identified expenditures may change after further study and town meeting action.

### Capital Investment Needs 2011-2020

Item	Year	Priority	Estimated Cost	Probable Funding Source
Town Road Improvements	2011-2020	High	\$2,300,000	CR/RF
Robinson Dam Improvements	2011-2020	High	\$50,000	CR/RF
Water Body Public Access Acquisition and Improvements	2013-2020	High	\$30,000	RF/G/D
Fire Department/Self Contained Breathing Apparatus	2012	High	\$70,000	RF
Town Office Improvements	2011-2016	Medium	\$100,000	CR/RF
Community Hall Improvements	2012-2015	Medium	\$25,000	CR/RF
Heniger Park Improvements	2016-2020	Medium	\$50,000	RF/G/D
Town Garage	2013-2014	Medium	\$450,000	B
Highway Equipment	2013-2016	Medium	\$500,000	RF/B
Conservation Easements	2011-2020	Medium	\$25,000	G/D
Fire Department/Tanker Replacement	2012	Medium	\$170,000	RF
Recreation Facility Improvement		Low	TBD	G/RF/D

#### NOTES:

B: Bond  
 CR: Current Revenues  
 G: Grants  
 RF: Reserve Funds  
 D: Donations  
 TBD: To Be Determined

# **Future Land Use Plan**

## **PLANNING TOPIC                      Future Land Use Plan**

### **State of Maine goal Plan that needs to address:**

**To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the state's rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.**

### **Introduction**

A major purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to establish a guide for ongoing development of the community. The plan establishes the foundation for land use decisions and defines areas most suitable for development. It is important that the plan sets forth a realistic development guide so that the community can prosper and at the same time maintain valued characteristics.

The purpose of the Future Land Use Plan and Map is to identify the future land use characteristics of Otisfield. The narrative of the Future Land Use Plan identifies areas where various land uses should occur. The location of these areas and use characteristics has been based upon the Vision of Otisfield.

The Future Land Use Map shows the land use areas. It is the purpose of the Future Land Use Map to indicate the general locations of desired future development. Some critical resource areas as defined the Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule are not identified on the map but will be conserved by recommendations contained in Comprehensive Plan. The map was developed based on the Vision of Otisfield and policies contained in the Plan. It was developed without consideration of individual property lines or ownership and, thus, should be viewed as a visualization of how the Comprehensive Plan recommends the Town develop in the years ahead. It must be realized that as demands dictate, the Future Land Use Plan and Map will require revisions.

### **Implementation**

The Future Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Map will be implemented through amendments to the existing site plan review and subdivision ordinances. In addition, there will be consideration of the need for the development of a land use ordinance. Any land use ordinance will contain only those needed standards that are not or cannot be included in current ordinances. The Future Land Use Plan will provide basic direction to the drafters of ordinance amendments in relation to the purposes and dimensional requirements of the various land use areas. The Future Land Use Map will also serve as a basis for the drafting of any future land management district map. During the development of ordinances and ordinance amendments, the public would be given ample opportunity, through public meetings and hearings, for input.

## **Policies of the Plan are to:**

### ***State policies required to address State of Maine Goal:***

*Support the locations, types, scales, and intensities of land uses that Otisfield desires as stated in its vision.*

*Support the level of financial commitment necessary to provide needed public infrastructure in identified growth areas.*

*Establish/continue efficient permitting procedures, especially in growth areas.*

*Protect critical resource areas from the impacts of development.*

*Coordinate Otisfield's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts.*

### **Otisfield's policies:**

Manage commercial land use adjacent to Route 121 to minimize traffic congestion and visual qualities including the entrances or gateways to the town.

That major changes in land use and major new development are consistent with Otisfield's character.

## **Strategies of the Plan are to:**

### ***State strategies required to address State of Maine Goal:***

*Develop regulatory and non regulatory provisions to implement the Future Land Use Plan that include: clear definitions of desired scale, intensity and location of future development; establish fair and efficient permitting procedures and appropriate fees; streamline permitting procedures in growth areas; and clearly define protective measures for critical resource areas.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Planning Board & Ordinance Policy Review  
Committee/Short Term & Ongoing*

*Include in the Capital Investment Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to implement the Future Land Use Plan.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen/Ongoing*

*Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Planning Board/Short Term & Ongoing*

*Employ a Code Enforcement Officer who is certified in accordance with 30-A MRSA §4451 (Training and Certification of Code Enforcement Officers) and provide him/her with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen/Ongoing*

*Establish a system to track new development by type and location and prepare an annual report.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Code Enforcement Officer/Short Term &  
Ongoing*

*Periodically (at least every five years) evaluate implementation of the plan.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Code Enforcement Officer & Planning  
Board/Mid Term*

## **Future Land Use Plan**

### **Significant Resource Areas**

Significant resource areas are those areas in Otisfield most vulnerable from development. These areas warrant special consideration due to their vulnerability of degradation as the result of various land use activities. Land use activities within these areas require stricter regulation than in other areas. These areas that include critical resource areas as defined the Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, will, as stated in Otisfield's Vision, provide undeveloped areas of open space and high surface water quality that attract both year-round and summer residents. Significant resource areas include the following.

#### **Shoreland Areas**

The purpose of designating shoreland areas is to protect the resource values and water quality of ponds, rivers, streams and freshwater wetlands while permitting shoreland residential and recreational uses that are compatible with these resources. This area includes the land area within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of Little Pond, Moose Pond, Pleasant Lake, Saturday Pond, Thompson Lake, the Crooked River and freshwater wetlands greater than 10 acres in size as required by the State of Maine Shoreland Zoning Law.

Land use activities in these areas require strict oversight to protect water quality and the other values of these resources. Year-round and seasonal residential development that complies with the standards of the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act would be permitted as well as recreational type uses. Timber harvesting and land clearing for allowed development would be conducted according to the standards in the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

#### **Floodplains**

Land area within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high water mark of the Crooked River that is also in the 100-year floodplain would continue to be in a resource protection district, under shoreland zoning, which prohibits most structural development. The land area in all other 100-year floodplains would be regulated as required by the Floodplain Management Ordinance.

#### **Wetlands**

Open freshwater wetland of 10 acres and more as mapped by the United States Department of the Interior and areas within 250 feet or 75 feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge will be designated resource protection recreational under shoreland zoning. Other wetlands, through standards contained in the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Ordinances, will be conserved to maintain their resource values and functions.

## Steep Slopes

Development, including new roads serving structures, should avoid areas of two or more contiguous acres when sustained slopes are 20 percent or greater. Standards in ordinances will be added that require such development to take place away from these steep slopes or undertake engineering to minimize negative results from development on these slopes.

## Lake and Pond Watersheds

The lakes and ponds of Otisfield are important to town character and its economy. All of the town's land areas drain to a lake or pond either located in Otisfield or other community. Activities within its watershed, including road building, structural development, and timber harvesting, can have a significant impact on water quality. Ordinance standards will include provisions to ensure that new development and other land use activities are undertaken to minimize negative effects on water quality. These standards will include erosion and sediment control measures, phosphorus export limitations and other recognized techniques, to protect water quality. When timber harvesting occurs, land owners and jobbers will be encouraged to employ best management practices.

Ordinance standards will encourage open space development techniques that conserve open space and minimize road construction. Lot size and density requirements for open space development will be in a minimum lot size range of two to five acres with the maximum of one acre developed and will result in a low density pattern of development.

## Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife, both game and non game, are valued by both residents and visitors to Otisfield. Suitable habitats are critical to their health and survival. Deer wintering areas, waterfowl habitat, riparian areas and large blocks of undeveloped land are critical habitats. These areas will be conserved through shoreland zoning standards and site plan and subdivision ordinance standards that conserve their resource values.

*For the purposes of the Growth Management Law, these areas are considered Critical Resource Areas.*

## Village Areas

While Otisfield in its early years had distinct villages that is not the case today. There are, however, three locations that retain some typical small town village characteristics such as public buildings, stores and/or homes close to each other. These include Bolsters Mill and the area across the Crooked River in Harrison, Spurrs Corner and East Otisfield/Wight Corners.

The purpose of the village areas is to encourage a future village character in these locations. A mixture of land uses suited to traditional village and expanded village locations will be encouraged. These uses include residential, government, public and small commercial. Over the 10-year planning period it is anticipated growth related capital investments will be directed to these locations.

Development standards to be included in ordinances will be flexible to provide for continuation and expansion of traditional village activities. Site Plan Review standards for non- residential

development can be used to determine compatibility of new development with existing uses. Such standards consider traffic and access, noise, odor, lighting, parking, landscaping, signage and structure design will also be considered for compatibility with village character. A pedestrian environment and scale will be promoted by land use standards where appropriate.

Ordinances will be amended and/or developed to provide for flexibility in relation to setbacks and lot coverage for village locations. Lot sizes will be in the range of one acre, provided that required separation between private wells and septic systems can be met. In other locations lot sizes will be a minimum of 40,000 square feet. Setbacks will reflect traditional village character with not more than 60 percent of the lot covered by structures and other non vegetated surfaces.

*For the purposes of the Growth Management Law, the Village Areas are considered as a Growth Area.*

### **Growth Areas**

The purpose of the growth area is to have most of the expected new growth located here. The growth will be for the most part residential rather than commercial. As stated in Otisfield's Vision, new growth and development will exhibit a planned approach rather lacking a "rhyme or reason." A mixture of land uses will take place in growth areas include residential, mobile home parks, government, public, commercial and rural. Over the 10-year planning period it is anticipated growth related capital investments, primarily associated with roads, will be directed to these locations. The Growth Area includes those portions of Otisfield that are served by state and local public roads that are generally in a condition to accept new growth, areas where new growth can be served by existing municipal services and the two TIF lots.

To manage development in this area so that desired community character and values are maintained, the ordinances will require modification.

New residential subdivisions that will have lots accessed by the major public roads would be designed to limit the number of individual drives entering the highways. This can be accomplished by common driveways and/or access roads. Individual lot residential development, or development that does not require subdivision approval, should design their driveway entrances to maximize site distances.

Non-residential development and expansion will be managed under site plan review. Because the Future Land Use Plan does not identify specific areas limited to commercial uses, compatibility criteria will be used to determine the appropriateness of the location of such development. These criteria would include highway suitability, entrance locations to minimize potential traffic hazards, noise, lighting, odor, smoke, signage, surface and ground water impacts, other environmental impacts, buffering and adverse impacts on residential locations.

The minimum lot requirement will be two acres depending on soil conditions. Lot coverage or the area covered with structures and other non-vegetated surfaces for non-residential uses would not exceed 50 percent of the lot.

*For the purposes of the Growth Management Law, the Village/Growth Area is considered as a Growth Area.*

## **Rural Area**

The purpose of the Rural Area is to maintain land used or that could be used for agriculture, and commercial forest land while allowing compatible land uses. Commercial forest land contributes to local and regional economies help define the character of Otisfield, help protect surface water quality and provide areas for wildlife. Much of these lands lack accessibility by public roads. These areas support the Town's Vision of undeveloped areas consisting of large tracts of open space, scenic views, a largely undeveloped Crooked River corridor and wildlife habitat.

The rural area contains large areas of undeveloped land that are expected to remain as such into the future. Some of these lands have development limitations including soils and slopes unsuited to development and limited accessibility. Others are owned by people who have no interest in developing their lands.

Land use standards will allow agriculture, forestry and other land uses requiring rural locations, low density residential and commercial at a scale and character appropriate for Otisfield. Natural resource-based and recreation uses are appropriate activities for this area. Single lot residential development that takes place in this area will be at a density to maintain the primary rural character of the area. Lot size and density will be a minimum of two acres. Residential subdivision will be developed to limit encroachment upon commercial forest lands and maintain large unfragmented wildlife habitats. Standards will encourage open space type development that allows for reduced lot sizes and frontages for the set aside of open space. Lot size and density requirements for open space development will be in a minimum lot size range of two to five acres with the maximum of one acre developed and will result in a low density pattern of development.

Site plan review standards for commercial development that may take place adjacent to Route 121 will include buffering/landscaping, parking areas to the side or rear, lighting that limits glare and lighting of the night sky, and building design and scale that does not detract from Otisfield's desired character. Lot coverage for structures and parking areas will not exceed 50% of the lot area.

*For the purposes of the Growth Management Law the Rural Area is considered as a Rural Area.*



# Regional Coordination Program

## PLANNING TOPIC

## Regional Coordination

### Introduction

The Town of Otisfield realizes that coordination and/or joint action is necessary to address a number of regional/interlocal planning issues. Based upon the results of the inventory and analysis, the review of the comprehensive plans of surrounding communities and the various policies contained in this Plan, the following regional issues have been included in the Regional Coordination Program.

### Regional Issues

The Region's economy is shifting from goods producing to service providing.

The tourism based economy needs to be maintained/expanded.

Joint efforts between Otisfield and other communities are needed to protect the water quality of Thompson Lake, Pleasant Lake and the Crooked River.

The Towns of Casco, Poland, Oxford and Otisfield need to work together to maintain the Robinson Dam that controls the level of Thompson Lake.

Because of the small population size and tax base, Otisfield needs to work with other communities to provide some of necessary public services.

### Policies of the Plan are to:

#### *Minimum state policies required to address state goals:*

*Coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.*

*Initiate participation in or continue to participate in any regional economic development efforts.*

*Encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.*

*Develop or continue to update a prioritized ten-year improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for local/regional transportation system facilities that reflects community, regional, and state objectives.*

*Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation and land use planning efforts.*

*Cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.*

*Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses.*

*Connect with regional trail systems where possible.*

*Coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.*

**Otisfield's policies:**

Cooperate with towns in the region on economic development opportunities that improve the quantity and quality of jobs and improve the tax revenues to Otisfield.

Maintain the resource values of the Crooked River watershed.

Maximize the use of shared public service delivery.

Assure that lake water levels in Thompson Lake are maintained.

**Strategies of the Plan are to:**

***State Strategies required***

*Financially support regional economic development activities/organizations provided they recognize Otisfield's goals.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Selectmen/Ongoing</i>
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*Continue to participate in appropriate regional economic development efforts.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Selectmen/Ongoing</i>
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*Support a regional affordable housing coalition.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Selectmen/Ongoing</i>
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*Develop and maintain a prioritized ten-year improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for local/regional transportation system facilities that reflects community, regional, and state objectives.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Road Commissioner, Road Study Committee &amp; Selectmen/Ongoing</i>
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*Participate in regional and state transportation and land use planning efforts.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Selectmen/Ongoing</i>
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*Work with the MaineDOT as appropriate to address deficiencies in the system or conflicts between local, regional, and state priorities for the local transportation system.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Selectmen/Ongoing</i>
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*Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses and connect with regional trail systems where possible.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Snowmobile Club Recreation Committee &amp; Interested Groups/Ongoing</i>
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*Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.*

<i>Responsibility/Time Frame</i>	<i>Conservation Committee &amp; Lake Associations/Ongoing</i>
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*Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical natural resources.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Committee, Lake Associations, Western Foot Hills Land Trust, Nature Conservancy, & Upper Headwaters Alliance/Ongoing*

*Continue and explore additional options for regional delivery of local services.*

*Responsibility/Time Frame*

*Selectmen/Ongoing*

**Otisfield's strategies:**

Continue to cooperate with organizations and other towns in the region to develop appropriate regional economic development opportunities.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Selectmen/Ongoing

Coordinate with the towns that share common lake/pond to develop common watershed protection measures.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Conservation Committee & Planning Board/Short Term

Participate in the Upper Headwaters Alliance effort to protect the Crooked River watershed.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Conservation Committee & Planning Board/Ongoing

Participate in the Robinson Dam Committee to maintain the dam.

Responsibility/Time Frame

Selectmen or Appointee Ongoing

## **Plan Evaluation Measures**

The real value of the comprehensive plan is in its implementation and evaluation of proposed actions. The following measures are recommended to be periodically (at a minimum of every five years) evaluated:

The degree that the future land use plan strategies have been implemented.

Percent of municipal growth-related capital investments in growth areas.

Location and amount of new development in relation to growth areas, rural areas and critical resource areas.

Amount of critical resource areas protected through acquisition, easements or other measures.

The status of implementing the strategies of the Plan.

It will be the responsibility of the Planning Board with assistance from the Code Enforcement Officer to prepare reports that evaluate the above measures. Such reports will assess progress and recommend changes to the plan if it determines the Plan and/or implementation are not effective. All such reports will be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen.

At a minimum, all such reports will include the following:

The report will assess the degree that the future land use plan strategies have been implemented by including statements if each of the strategies under the contained in Planning Topic Future Land Use has been implemented and, if not, the reason.

The report will assess the percent of municipal growth-related capital investments in growth areas by identifying the type amount, location and year of all municipal growth-related capital investments.

The report will state the location, type, amount (number of new homes and businesses) and size by year of new development in relation to growth areas, rural areas and critical resource areas as designated in the Plan.

The report will document critical resource areas including information on type, area and location protected through acquisition, easements or other measures.

The report will assess the degree that the strategies of the Plan have been implemented by including statements if each of the strategies has been implemented and, if not, the reason.

## **Public Participation Summary**

**Comprehensive Plan Committee:** The Selectmen appointed a nine member committee to oversee the development of the comprehensive plan. The committee began meeting on a monthly basis in March 2010 and continued until the plan was ready for town meeting action.

**Public Visioning Session:** On July 8, 2010, the committee sponsored a visioning session.

**Public Forum:** On February 22, 2011, the committee conducted a forum to provide an overview of the plan and gain public insight. A public hearing was conducted on May 24, 2011.

**Use of Technology:** Notices of all meetings were posted on the town's Web Site as were plan drafts.

**Comprehensive Plan Committee:** Cheryl Cook, Chair, Bob Blake, Stan Brett, Lee Dassler, Robert Fellar, Judy Hall, Jean Hankins, Bruce Lablanc, Dan Peaco, and Joe Zillinsky.

# **Otisfield Comprehensive Plan Update**

## **Part II**

### **Inventory & Analysis**



# **I**

## **NTRODUCTION**

The Comprehensive Planning Update process needs to be based on an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the community. In planning terms, the "community" means its people, infrastructure, services, and natural features. To provide that factual informational base, the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee collected, organized, and analyzed information about Otisfield. Areas considered in the inventory and analysis elements related to population, economy, housing, transportation, natural resources, historic, cultural, and, archaeological resources, land use and development patterns, outdoor recreation, public facilities and fiscal capacity.

The information to prepare the inventory and analysis came from a number of sources. Individual committee members collected information only available in Otisfield. Such information included land use, scenic locations, outdoor recreation facilities and recent development trends. Other information came from state and federal sources.

The inventory and analysis also makes several forecasts for the 10-year planning period. These included year-round and seasonal population growth and housing demand. Such forecasts were based upon past trends and acceptable forecasting techniques.

The inventory and analysis is intended to be a snapshot of Otisfield based on the best information available in 2010. Communities are dynamic places and, thus, the inventory and analysis may not reflect all community characteristics at the time of adoption of the plan or five years from adoption. However, it presents a reliable picture of Otisfield and provides the necessary direction for the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee to identify issues and implications and formulate town goals and recommendations.

# **H**ISTORIC, ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

## **F**indings and Conclusions

- ❖ **Otisfield has at least five structures of unusual architectural significance.**
- ❖ **The Maine Historic Preservation Commission reports four known prehistoric archaeological sites located along the shores of Thompson Lake.**
- ❖ **The Otisfield Historical Society is an active group that undertakes numerous projects to retain the history of the Town.**

## **H**istorical Assessment

Otisfield's origins go back to 1736 when the Massachusetts General Court granted a township to the heirs and descendants of a military company headed by Captain John Gorham which participated in a 1690 military expedition against French-held Canada. When the New Hampshire-Massachusetts line was run, it was discovered that most of the granted land fell behind into New Hampshire; therefore, the grant was invalid. On June 15, 1771, the General Court made a second grant of land to the heirs of Gorham's company. Twenty Boston businessmen, most of whom had no connection to the original grantees, acquired rights to the land and became its proprietors. This land constitutes the present town of Otisfield as well as the eastern half of what is now Harrison and parts of Naples and Casco. In 1803, Phillips Gore, which fell between Oxford and Otisfield, was added to Otisfield.

On October 16, 1776, at a meeting in Watertown, Massachusetts, the proprietors voted to name their town Otis Field, presumably to honor Col. James Otis, one of the major property holders.

The 1771 grant required the proprietors to settle at least 30 families in Otisfield within six years, to build a meetinghouse for worship, and to employ "a learned Protestant Minister." One sixty-fourth of the town's area was to be awarded to the first minister, one sixty-fourth to the general support of the ministry, one sixty-fourth to support a grammar school, and one sixty-fourth for the support of Harvard College (where ministers were educated). This last provision resulted in the naming of College Swamp.

The required meetinghouse was not constructed until 1797 on Bell Hill, the second highest spot in town (Scribner Hill is the highest) where settlers had built early because the higher ground was less prone to early frost in the late fall and late frost in the spring, which would destroy their crops. There have been two meetinghouses at this location. The second, built by Nathan Nutting, Jr., in 1839, still survives and, although no longer used as a Congregational Church, is preserved by the Bell Hill Meeting House Association, which holds an annual service there on the last Sunday of each July. There have been three other church buildings in Otisfield: the Spurrs Corner Church of the Christian and Missionary Alliance

(formerly a Congregational Church), the East Otisfield Free Baptist Church (originally a union church used by both Methodists and Baptists), and a Free Baptist Church in South Otisfield which disintegrated about 1940 after a long period of disuse.

Otisfield has always been a rural town with few concentrations of population. The names and popular nicknames of the various areas are (from east to west): the Gore, Wardwellville (upper end of Bean Road); the Canada Hill area, East Otisfield (Pugleyville), Cobb Hill Road (formerly the New Road), Rayville (after Dr. David Ray, who built an early grist mill and sawmill at the outlet of Saturday Pond), Scribner Hill, Swampville, Bell Hill, Nutting Hill, Hancockville (area north of Seeds of Peace Camp), South Otisfield (Dunkertown), Bolster's Mills (partly in Harrison), Otisfield (Spurrs Corner), Tamworth, Jugtown, and Oak Hill. The earliest settlement in Otisfield was at Edes Falls, which became part of Naples in 1848.

Over the years, Otisfield has had a variety of organizations besides its churches to enrich the social life of its citizens. Balls, corn huskings, quilting bees, singing schools, sewing circles, and 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnics and fireworks made things livelier in the nineteenth century. Until about 1930, organized singing groups met in various homes. Square dances were held in the two halls of the National Grange: one on the Gore and one at Spurrs Corner. Later dances were held in Otisfield's Community Hall. An agricultural fair was held in Spurrs Corner as late as the 1920s. In recent years, the Volunteer Firefighters Association has sponsored a number of seasonal activities for the community, notably the annual Winter Carnival each February and a Harvest Dance. In 1981 the Otisfield Historical Society was formed; it sponsors 4 or 5 programs each year open to the public.

At one time there were fourteen named school districts in Otisfield, each with a one-room building. Only one of these schoolhouses is left in its original form, the brick schoolhouse on Bell Hill built in 1839 and last used in 1940. It is now owned and preserved by the Bell Hill Meetinghouse Association. Now part of School Administrative District 17, Otisfield's junior and senior high school students travel to Norway to attend school. The Otisfield Community School on Powhatan Road, which includes students from kindergarten through fourth grade at this time, opened its doors in 1990.

The population of Otisfield reflects its original settlement by English colonists from Massachusetts. From 1910 to 1920, a considerable number of families of Finnish background arrived in town, in many cases buying up the old farms which the earlier settlers had given up on. Hard-working families named Heikkinen, Tikkanen, and Jaakkola settled on Bell Hill, bringing not only new blood into town but also new customs, traditions, and novelties like saunas and skis. A number of families of French Canadian heritage also enriched the town's population in the early twentieth century. Like most other rural Maine communities, Otisfield lost heavily in population in the years after the Civil War. The westward migration, the drift of younger people to the cities, the change from small industry to large industry, all tolled heavily on the farm population. From a peak of 1,307 people in 1840, the population declined in the next 100 years to only 488 in 1940. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the town's population grew in numbers and diversity as Otisfield's affordable land, scenic vistas, and pristine lakes proved attractive to individuals and families. In the year 2000, the population rose to all-time high of 1,560.

In the days before the general use of fossil fuels and insulation, a great deal of hard work went into supplying firewood for the winter. The oldest houses have multiple fireplaces around a single chimney, replaced by cast-iron stoves beginning in 1840. From its earliest days, Otisfield took responsibility for its poor. Until 1847, the usual method was to auction each pauper off at the annual town meeting to the lowest bidder who promised to house and care for that person for a year. Later, following the example of most other Maine towns, Otisfield maintained a poor farm on Swampville Road. The town farm lasted from 1865 to 1927.

In earlier years, Otisfield's principal source of cash income was its sawmills; the earliest one was built in 1812. The largest and longest lived of these was located in East Otisfield, operated before 1900 by Stephen Jillson and later by the Kemp Brothers until 1930. Another large mill was located at Bolsters Mills on the Otisfield side, last operated by Fred Clark, who closed the mill in the 1920s. The second largest industry was the "corn shop" (or cannery), of which there were two in town. The larger of these, for canning sweet corn, was established in 1890 in South Otisfield and operated by Ephraim and George Jillson until 1925. The second, which operated early in the twentieth century, was Harry M. Stone's small shop in East Otisfield which canned apples, vegetables, and jellies. At various times, Otisfield had grist mills, blacksmith shops, a tannery, a pants factory and shoe shop, a cider mill, a tin shop, a cooper shop for making barrels, a shingle mill, a carding machine to prepare wool for spinning, even a hat shop. Although most of these early mills and factories were gone by 1900, as late as the 1950s, Glenn C. Henry, an inventor and engineer who was sometimes called "the folding man," ran a small shop in Spurrs Corner where he produced collapsible record albums, notebooks, and even folding boats. Commercial apple growing, hop production, and chicken production, once important parts of the town's agricultural industry, have all disappeared. Some timber is still sold to sawmills. Many still have vegetable gardens and a few raise meat-animals for their own use. At present, the town has only two small retail stores, the Outpost II in East Otisfield and a general store in Bolsters Mills.

The town's small industries have been replaced in part by today's tourist industry: camps and cottages on Pleasant Lake, Thompson Lake, and Saturday and Moose Ponds. Today, most Otisfield residents commute to work outside of town, and Otisfield has become quite popular with retired citizens who enjoy the rural environment. A number of these newcomers have purchased and restored some of Otisfield's old farmhouses; others have remodeled and winterized former camps on the town's lakes and ponds.

Perhaps the most striking event in Otisfield's recent political history was its "secession" from Cumberland County in 1978, a change which brought the town nearer to its county seat and made more logical its inclusion in SAD 17. Now legally part of Oxford County, Otisfield remains a pleasant residential town. Here, where the present is closely linked with the past, Otisfield remains a small town with pride in its natural surroundings, its relaxed way of life, and its tradition of independence.

#### Historic Resources Buildings and Architecture

In 1980, a number of Otisfield residents participated in an architectural survey of the town. The process of conducting the survey resulted in the organization of the Otisfield Historical Society in 1981; the results of the survey were incorporated in Randall Bennett's *Oxford County, Maine: A Guide to Its Historic Architecture* (1984), from which much of the following information is drawn.

Otisfield has at least five structures of unusual architectural significance. The Ryefield Bridge, which spans the Crooked River between Harrison and Otisfield, was built in 1912. It is the only double-intersection Warren through-truss bridge in the state. In 2002, the State of Maine included this bridge in its list of 14 Historic Bridges of Maine, making it eligible for the extensive repairs and repainting which were completed in November 2002.

The Lyman Nutting House at 804 State Route 121, where members of the original Nutting family still live, is listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. Nathan Nutting built the story-and-a-half section in 1795; his son, Nathan Nutting, Jr., built the Federal style northern half of the house in 1825. It has been said that the detached barn near the house was a model for other Otisfield barns, and the nearby three-level granary is an unusual example of historic outbuildings.

Nathan Nutting, Jr., who studied architecture in Boston, was also responsible for constructing the Bell Hill Meeting House, completed in 1839. Located near the top of Bell Hill, this Federal style building has become a town landmark and is also listed on the National Register. So is the brick building located next to it, the Bell Hill Schoolhouse, Otisfield's only remaining one-room schoolhouse, a plain building also completed in 1839. For many years, the large field surrounding the meetinghouse served as the town common and was used as the town's muster ground for annual drills of the town militia.

The remaining Otisfield structure of unusual significance is the Levi Sargent House at 747 Gore Road, now owned by Dan and Marsha Brett. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Also known as "Little Green Acres," this house has been called "a remarkable survival of a building type closely associated with the settlement period in northwestern Maine." Architectural historians believe it was built about 1812. The two-story house was constructed of squared, hewn logs averaging some ten inches high by eight inches wide. It is the only surviving example of such a log structure in Oxford County.

Throughout the town, there are many other examples of structures representing early nineteenth-century rural Maine architecture at its best. While the one-and-a-half story Cape was the predominant type of early building form in town, Otisfield has a number of examples of early two-story houses, in addition to the Lyman Nutting house mentioned above.

One of the earliest and most impressive of these is the house built by mill-owner David Ray in 1795 near the outlet of Saturday Pond. In addition to being one of the town's oldest buildings, this large two-and-a-half-story house is one of Oxford County's few remaining examples of a "plank frame" house, which uses thick vertical planking instead of studding between sill and plate. The Jonathan Sawyer House, thought to have been built between 1785 and 1789, still stands on East Andrews Hill Road. It features eight working fireplaces off a massive center chimney. At 720 State Route 121, the Sawyer-Stone House, built about 1810 and now owned by James A. and Marie C. Bowden, immediately catches one's attention because of its symmetrical, foursquare design with hip roof, an unusual style for this area. Owned by members of the Stone family after 1847, it served as an inn and post office for many years. The Levi Patch House, another two-and-a-half story house built about 1810, is located at 123 Bell Hill Road and is now owned by John S. Pottle. Although dating from the Federal period, it impresses one as Colonial. Of special interest are its eyebrow windows and arched doorways. In the Bolster's Mills section of Otisfield, there are two noteworthy examples of Federal style houses built between 1825 and 1835. The earlier of these is the Cook-Weston House at 6 Big Hill Road, owned by Dwight and Pat Burkard. This house has been attributed to Nathan Nutting, Jr., architect of the Bell Hill Meetinghouse. Its cornices and doorway are particularly noteworthy. A final example of Federal style is the Haskell House at 30 Big Hill Road, owned by Chester Barker, which features another handsome doorway.

Far more prevalent in Otisfield are the early nineteenth-century Cape style houses which are distributed throughout town. A few are worth special mention. The oldest of these may be the Spurr-Knight House at 1182 State Route 121. Near the Spurrs Corner section of town, this double Cape dates back to about 1790 when the first section was built. The house at 483 State Route 121, built about 1800 by Nathan Wight and now owned by Arnold and Susan Harmon, has been called "one of the finest surviving examples" in Oxford County of a broad-roofed, low-posted Cape with a center chimney. Near the house is the Wight Family Cemetery, one of the town's oldest. The Holden Farmstead at 303 Oak Hill Road, owned by Sean and Claire Powell and built about 1812, is notable for its early nineteenth-century interior wall stenciling attributed to Moses Eaton, an itinerant New Hampshire stenciler. Finally, the Holden-Knight House (c. 1825-26), originally located at Spurrs Corner but recently moved to 126 Abi Road, is a well-maintained example of a high-posted, center chimney Cape.

A recent program of the Otisfield Historical Society featured nine old brick buildings scattered throughout town. These were all built in the short period between 1834-1870. One of these, the Bell Hill

Schoolhouse, has already been mentioned. Most of the others, such as the Asa Andrews House (1853) on West Andrews Hill Road, the Samuel Knight House (1835) and James Sampson House (1839), opposite one another at 353 and 354 Bell Hill Road, and the Elisha Lombard House, 675 Gore Road, are Cape style. However, the two-and-a-half story Levi Mains House at 33 Bishop Road, now owned by Daniel and Susan Giancarlo, deserves special mention. It was built by town official Levi Mains in 1868 and is considered “a fine example of a large Greek Revival side-hall-plan house” of considerable architectural sophistication. What makes the Mains house particularly unusual is its remote hillside location on a narrow road branching off from Oak Hill, “far away from the few county locations where such substantial residences were commonly built.”

#### Cemeteries, Stone Walls, and Mill Sites

The town’s fourteen known cemeteries are an obvious, enduring historical record, which should be protected and cared for to the best of our ability. Cemeteries maintained by the town are the Bell Hill Cemetery, located across from the Meetinghouse; the Cedarcrest Cemetery on State Route 121 south of Spurr’s Corner; the East Otisfield Cemetery; the Highland Cemetery on the Swampville Road; the Oak Hill Cemetery on Oak Hill Road; the two cemeteries on Scribner Hill, sometimes designated Lower Yard and Upper Yard; the Wight Family Cemetery on State Route 121; the Cobb Hill Road or Winship Cemetery on Cobb Hill Road; and the South Otisfield Cemetery on Powhatan Road near Mayberry Hill. Elmwood, the largest of the town’s cemeteries, is opposite the East Otisfield Free Baptist Church on Rayville Road; it is maintained by the Elmwood Cemetery Association. The Merrill Memorial Cemetery on Gore Road and the Oakdale Cemetery on Jesse’s Road near Scribner’s Mills are also maintained by private cemetery associations. The Reuben Keene Cemetery is located on the Coon Road.

The stone walls, which once indicated property boundaries and limits of pastures, are present throughout the town and provide obvious reminders that the town once had far more cleared fields and pasture than it does now. However, because these stone walls have been a convenient source of raw material as well as an impediment to snow plows, they are less evident than in former years.

Stone remnants of the town’s old mill sites, a solid reminder of Otisfield’s brief industrial period, are still present in Bolsters Mills, Rayville, East Otisfield, and quite possibly other locations. Stone house and barn foundations abound in a number of locations such as the now remote Jugtown Road. These cellar holes serve to remind us of our nineteenth-century predecessors and possibly contain information of value to future archaeologists.

#### Archival and Historic Records

The Town of Otisfield has been fortunate in regard to its town records. The town has luckily avoided losing these irreplaceable resources to fires, floods, or overzealous housecleaning. The most important of these, including the early Proprietor’s Book of Records, which dates back to 1771, and the records of Otisfield Plantation, 1787-1798, were microfilmed in 1976 as a Bicentennial project. An archival copy of this microfilm is stored in the Maine State Archives, Augusta. All the town’s records and archives are well protected and organized in the town vault.

The Otisfield Historical Society’s archives, all related to Otisfield, currently measure 130 linear feet and are at present (2010) housed in a fairly secure second-floor area above a member’s renovated barn. The Society intends to move these to a more permanent location in its new headquarters, the Otisfield Town House, as soon as renovations have been made to that building. Since 1981, the Society has been collecting paper records, account books, photos, maps, diaries, and letters written and kept by town residents. It has also created a substantial chronological archive of newspaper clippings about Otisfield

people, organizations, places, and events. Over a 5-year period, members also photographed nearly every building in town, old and new, and created a collection of 10 boxes of photographs, with pertinent historical information, which is titled “Otisfield in the Year 2000.” The Society also has videotapes of some of its programs. All the holdings of the society are available to the public on request.

Otisfield history has been well explored in several articles which have appeared in *Maine History* and other historical journals. Worth special mention is “A Cage for John Sawyer: The Poor of Otisfield, Maine,” written by Jean Hankins and published in 1994.

## **Archaeological Resources**

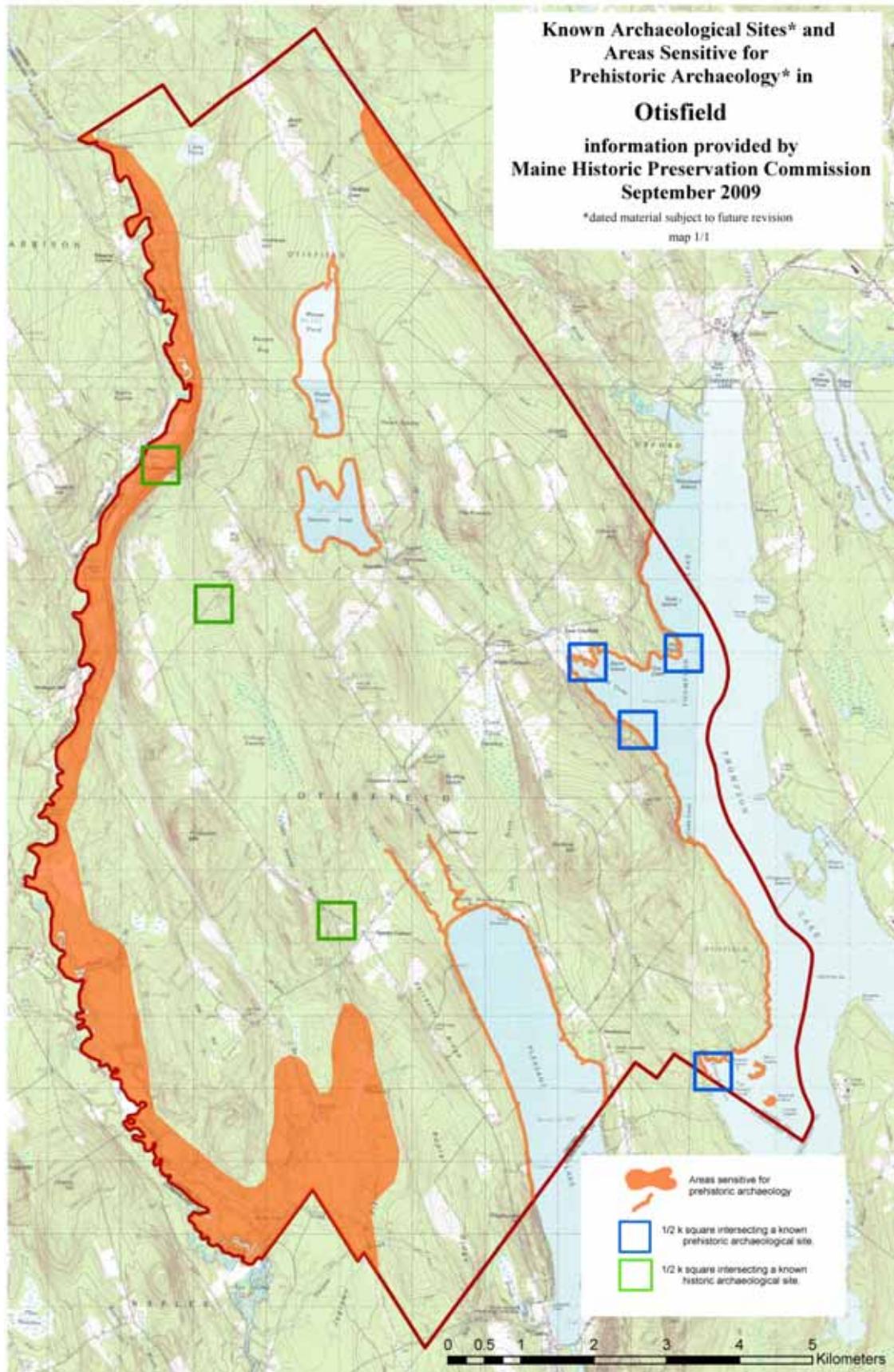
Archaeological resources are physical remains of the past, most commonly buried in the ground or very difficult to see on the surface. Archaeological sites are defined as prehistoric or historic. Prehistoric sites are those areas where remains are found that were deposited thousands of years before written records began in the United States. These sites are the only source of information about prehistory. More recent archaeological sites are those sites which occurred after written records began. In Maine, archaeological sites are most commonly found within 25 yards of an existing or former shoreline and early roads.

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission reports four known prehistoric archaeological sites located along the shores of Thompson Lake. These four are located in what is today known as Long Point, Otisfield Cove, an area on the western shore formerly occupied by Camp Ohuivo, and Edwards Cove. The Commission has identified areas along the Crooked River and the shores of lakes and ponds as areas sensitive for prehistoric archaeological resources. Four archaeological sites associated with farmsteads have been reported by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. They suggest that future field work should focus on agricultural, residential, and industrial sites relating to the earliest Euro-American settlement in the town in the 1770s.

## **Protection of Historic and Archaeological Resources**

The Otisfield Historical Society is an active group that undertakes numerous projects to retain the history of the town. It presents four or five programs each year that are open to the public. In 2009, the town transferred ownership of its Town House on Bell Hill Road to the Society to use as a meeting place and to house the Society’s collections and archives. In 2010, the Society received a New Century Grant to begin serious planning for moving to the Town House, which is listed on the National Register. During this process, the Society intends to work closely with the Maine Historic Preservation Committee.

Otisfield has adopted requirements in site plan review and subdivision standards that require the identification of resources and protection when development occurs.



# **P** EOPLE OF OTISFIELD

## **Findings and Conclusions**

- ❖ **Population estimates suggest a noteworthy increase in year-round population from 1,560 in 2000 to 1,880 in 2009.**
- ❖ **It is people moving into Otisfield rather than the natural increase that has been the controlling factor in the estimated increase in population.**
- ❖ **It is estimated that the peak seasonal population, or the people that are not full time residents, in Otisfield could exceed 2,000.**

## **I**ntroduction

Population trends and characteristics are a product of several factors. They include local and regional employment opportunities, the availability of housing in varying price ranges, the community's natural and social attributes and family ties. By looking at population characteristics, trends and forecasts, Otisfield can be prepared for population change as well as anticipate future demands on community services and land use changes. The population of Otisfield includes a "year-round population" that has not changed in numbers much over the last 40 years and a part time or seasonal population that has been growing.

When looking at the impacts of population change on the town, considering two population types is useful, year-round and part-time. Year-round population will pay local taxes, require town services and send children to local schools. Part-time or seasonal population may own vacation or second homes paying local taxes and requiring town services and/or spend money at local and regional businesses.

## **P**opulation Trends

Characteristics of the population will lend insight to understanding future growth and demands for community services. The population of Otisfield has been growing rapidly for the past thirty years, increasing at a much faster rate than the surrounding communities. The population distribution has aged since 1990. The aging population indicates the potential need for accessibility to medical and transportation services and for public safety improvements.

### Year-Round Population Change 1970-2000

	1970	1980	1990	2000	Change 90-00	Rate of Change 90-00
<b>Otisfield</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>1,136</b>	<b>1,560</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>37.3%</b>
Oxford	1,892	3,143	3,705	3,960	255	6.9%
Poland	2,015	3,578	4,342	4,866	524	12.2%
Norway	3,595	4,042	4,754	4,611	-143	-6.9%
Casco	1,256	2,225	3,018	3,469	451	14.9%
Harrison	1,045	1,648	1,951	2,315	364	18.6%
Naples	956	1,833	2,860	3,274	414	14.4%
Oxford County	43,457	48,958	52,602	54,755	2,153	4.1

The population is aging with a decrease in the under 5 and the 18 to 44 age groups. There was a 9% increase in the 45 to 64 age category. In 1990, the population was considerably younger than that of Oxford County, but it is now similar to the county except that there are fewer people in the over 65 age group which probably reflects a lack of appropriate housing and services for the elderly population.

The older population may purchase more expensive homes and add to the tax base while having fewer children to educate.

Population Distribution by Age				
	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 5	101	8.9%	82	5.3%
5-17	231	20.3%	350	22.4%
18-44	449	39.5%	509	32.7%
45-64	210	18.5%	429	27.5%
65+	145	12.8%	190	12.2%
Total	1,136		1,560	
Median Age	34.2		39.4	
Estimated Median Age 2009 <sup>1</sup>			44.6	

<sup>1</sup> Estimate provided by the American Community Survey-December 2010

Population estimates suggest a noteworthy increase in year-round population from 1,560 in 2000 to 1,880 in 2009. These estimates indicate an increase of 320 year-round residents. The natural increase in population (the number of births minus deaths) was 14 from 2000 to 2009. This indicates that it is people moving into Otisfield rather than the natural increase that has been the controlling factor in the estimated increase in population.

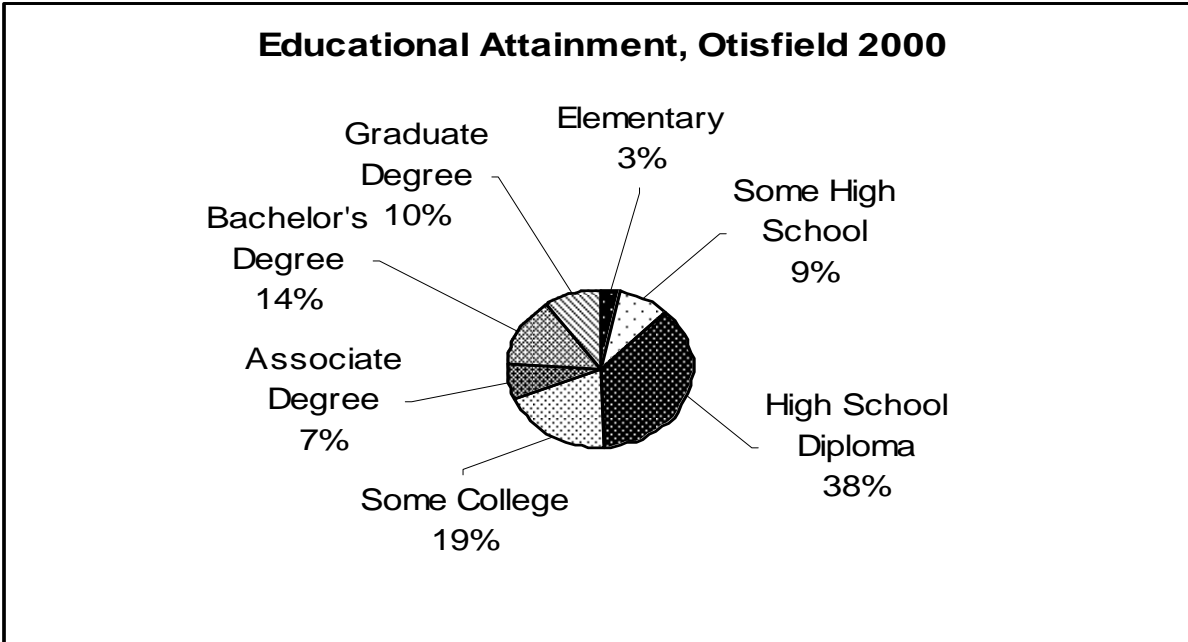
### Estimated Year-Round Population Change 2000-2009 <sup>1</sup>

	2000	2009	Change 2000-09	Rate of Change 2000-09
<b>Otisfield</b>	<b>1,560</b>	<b>1,880</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>20.5%</b>
Oxford	3,960	3,900	-40	-1.0%
Poland	4,866	5,340	470	9.7%
Norway	4,611	4,740	130	2.8%
Casco	3,469	3,730	260	7.5%
Harrison	2,315	2,130	-185	-8.0%
Naples	3,274	3,640	370	11.2%
Oxford County	54,755	56,410	1,660	3.0%

<sup>1</sup> Estimate provided by the American Community Survey-December 2010

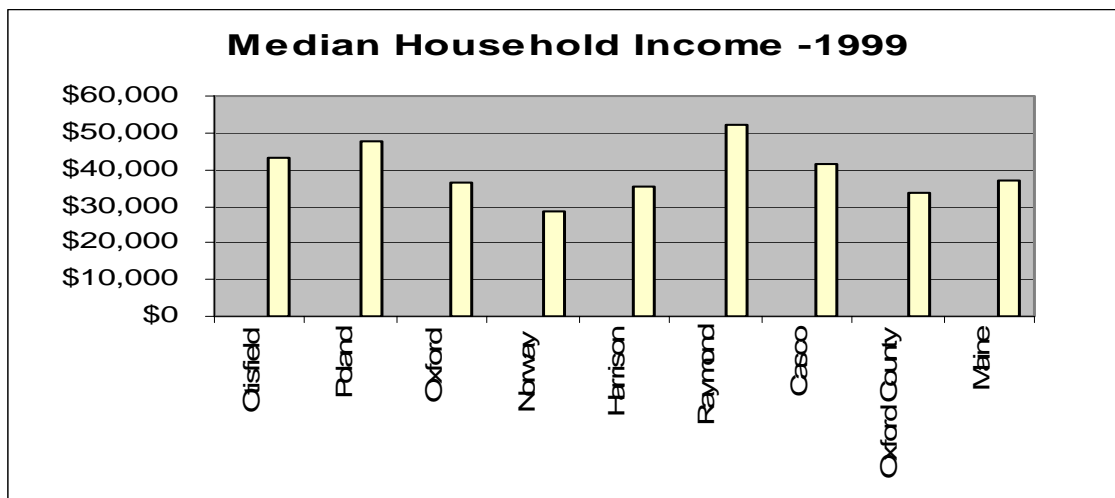
## Education

Otisfield has a higher percentage of Bachelor and Graduate Degrees than Oxford County as a whole.



## Income

The median household income in Otisfield has grown more than that of Oxford County and surrounding Oxford County towns since 1980. A review of the 1991 plan indicates that Otisfield's median household income was slightly below both the Town of Oxford and Oxford County in 1980. Since then, it has grown faster so that it now exceeds that of Oxford County and the neighboring towns in Oxford County. Of the surrounding towns, only Poland and Raymond have higher household incomes. The relatively high income levels are again reflective of the educational levels and job types held by Otisfield residents. The American Community Survey has estimated the 2009 median household in Otisfield to be \$55,830.



## Seasonal Population

Seasonal population is a measure of the number of people in a community who are not year-round residents. In Otisfield, this includes individuals staying in second homes and camps, seasonal residential camps (Camp Arcadia and Seeds of Peace) and day trippers. This seasonal population is an important part of social character and economy of the town.

It is estimated that the peak seasonal population, or the people that are not full time residents, in Otisfield could exceed 2,000 should all seasonal residences and seasonal residential camps be occupied to capacity. Realistically, seasonal population grows to between 1,000 and 1,200 during the busiest summer periods.

# Population Projections

## Year-Round Population

Anticipating population change is an integral part of the comprehensive planning process. Depending on future population characteristics, various community needs and facilities can be identified as well as providing an indication of future housing demand. It should be understood, however, that predicting population with great accuracy at the single community with a small population is extremely difficult.

Year-round population change is the result of two primary factors, natural increase and migration. Natural increase is derived from the number of births minus the number of deaths over a specific period. Migration is the number of persons moving into or out of a community over a period of time. Based upon the U.S. Census, Otisfield experienced a population increase of 424 (37%) persons between 1990 and 2000. It has been estimated the year-round population grew by 130 (8%) between 2000 and 2008.

The 2020 year-round population projection prepared by the Maine State Planning Office for Otisfield is approximately 1,850. This projection forecast indicates a growing population based on past trends and employment opportunities. Factors that could contribute to that projection being off include changes in the local and regional economies that create or displace jobs, energy cost and housing costs. These factors cannot be determined with any reliability and will require watching.

For the purposes of the comprehensive plan, it is expected that the 2020 year-round population for Otisfield will be in the range of 1,850 to 1,900.

Population Distribution by Age 2020		
Age	Number	Percent
0-17	315-320	17%
18-24	165-170	9%
25-44	315-320	17%
45-64	645-665	35%
65+	425-440	23%
Total	1,850-1,900	

## Seasonal Population

Future seasonal population will consist of second home owners and transients. In years past, growth in seasonal population was dependent primarily on growth in second/seasonal homes. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of seasonal homes increased by 40 compared to 120 between 1980 and 1990. New second/seasonal homes will continue to slow due to reduced shore front land availability and its costs. This will result in a stabilization of seasonal population attributed to second/seasonal home owners.

# ECONOMY

## Findings and Conclusions

- ❖ **Since 2000, Otisfield's labor force has increased by 9%.**
- ❖ **In 2000, the greatest number of workers, 28%, was employed in the education, health and social services followed by manufacturing and retail trade at 16% and 12% respectively.**
- ❖ **Otisfield is a supplier of workers to the Labor Market Area (LMA) and beyond.**

## Regional Economy

The region's economy was traditionally based on wood products-related manufacturing, leather and textiles. Tourism was also a component of the regional economy by people drawn to lakes and ponds in Bridgton, Harrison Norway, Otisfield and Waterford. In more recent times, the construction of manufactured housing was important. The area saw tremendous growth and transformation from a natural resource-based economy to a growing regional retail center and extended housing market for the Greater Portland area in the 1980s. Incomes rose more slowly in this LMA than elsewhere in the region because economic growth and diversification did not change the predominately low wage scales. This LMA also lost an extremely high percentage of manufacturing jobs through the 1980s, and 1990s. A labor market area (LMA) is an economically integrated geographic area which individuals can reside and find employment within a reasonable distance or can readily change employment without changing where they live. These areas may change over time based on employment opportunities and housing costs.

Major employers in the Region include Bancroft Contracting, Bridgton and Stephens Memorial Hospitals, Community Concepts, Hannaford Super Market, Keiser Industries, Maine Machine Products, Maine Veterans' Home, Shawnee Peak Ski Area and Wal-Mart.

The table below reports the employment by industry sector breakdown for the Bridgton/Paris LMA in 2008.

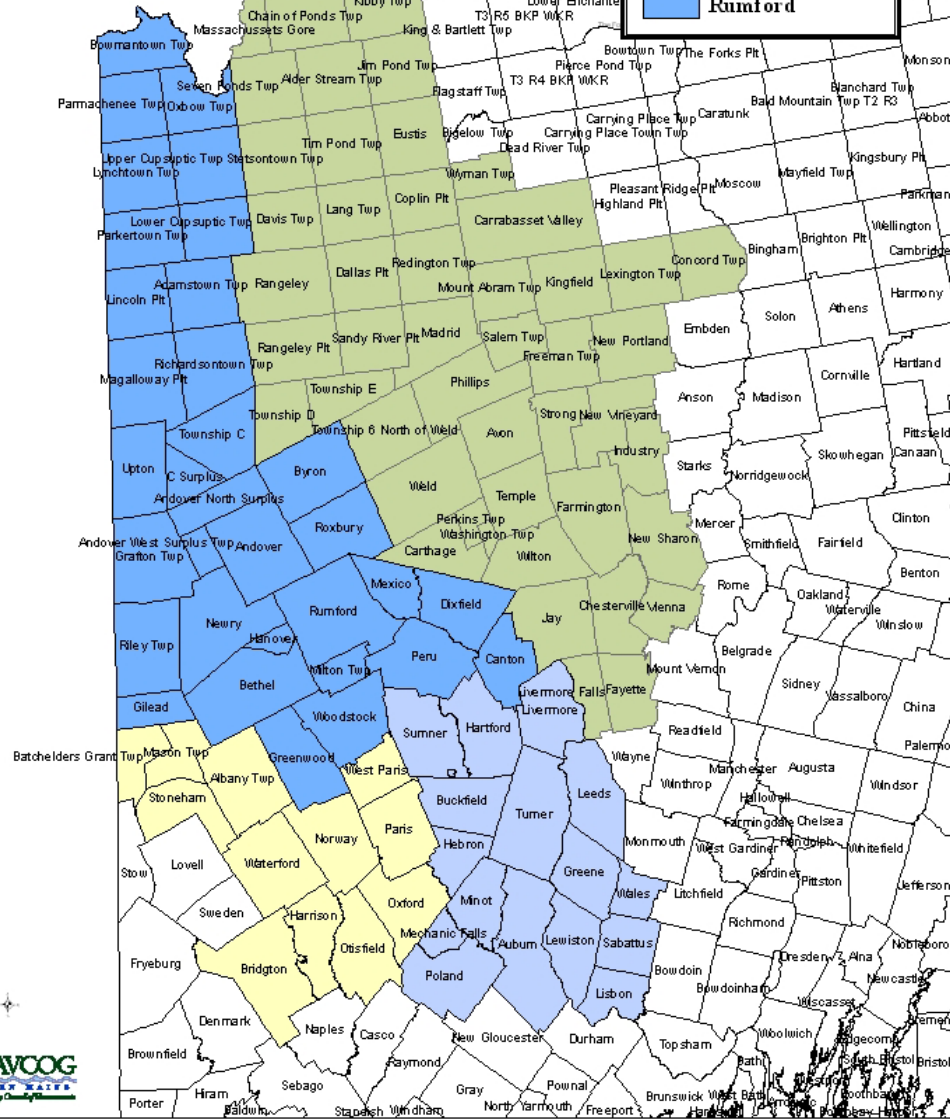
Total employment in the LMA was 9,523 in 2008, 17% were goods producing jobs and 73% service providing jobs.

Manufacturing accounts for 10% of jobs.

Retail trade made up 17% of all service producing jobs in the LMA.

Transportation and utilities make up 20% of service jobs, education and health services 35%, information jobs 1%, leisure and hospitality 10%, other services 3%, professional and business services 7% and finance, insurance and real estate 3%.

 Bridgeton-Paris  
 Farmington  
 Lewiston-Auburn  
 Rumford



### **Bridgton-Paris LMA Non-Farm Wage and Salary Employment**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	% Change 05-08
Total All Industries	9,727	9,763	9,753	9,523	-2.10%
Goods Producing	2,006	1,966	1,793	1,595	-20.49%
Construction	596	647	598	579	-2.85%
Manufacturing	1,357	1,280	1,153	975	-28.15%
Service Providing	7,721	7,797	7,960	7,928	2.68%
Transportation/Utilities	1,880	1,961	2,072	1,988	5.74%
Information	108	99	100	106	-1.85%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	414	396	391	361	-12.80%
Professional and Business	521	565	585	662	27.06%
Education and Health Services	3,137	3,174	3,228	3,301	5.23%
Leisure and Hospitality	993	944	960	957	-3.63%
Other Services	313	308	275	217	-30.67%
Public Administration	355	350	349	336	-5.35%

## **O**tisfield's Economy

In earlier years, Otisfield's principal source of cash income was its sawmills; the earliest one was built in 1812. The largest and longest lived of these was across the road from the general store in East Otisfield, operated before 1900 by Stephen D. Jillson and after 1900 by the Kemp Brothers up to 1930. Another large mill was located at Bolster's Mills on the Otisfield side. The latest owner was Fred Clark, who closed the mill in the 1920's. The second industry in importance was the "corn shop" (a cannery for sweet corn and sometimes for green beans) in South Otisfield, operated by Ephraim and George Jillson during the first quarter of this century. At various times, Otisfield had grist mills, blacksmith shops, a tannery, a pant factory and shoe shop, a cider mill and cannery for apples, a cooper shop for making barrels, a shingle mill and a carding machine to prepare wool for spinning. In the 1950's Glenn C. Henry inventor and engineer, ran a small factory at Spurr's Corner to make self-standing record albums, bookracks, and collapsible boats.

These small industries have all gone, but have been replaced by a thriving tourist industry. Boys and girls camps including Seeds of Peace and Camp Arcadia and many summer cottages on Pleasant Lake, Thompson Lake, Saturday and Moose Ponds are drivers of the local economy. In addition, many day trippers come to Otisfield for both summer and winter water related sports. This industry is one the Town wants to foster. There are two convenience stores in Otisfield serving local residents and visitors. Home-based businesses are scattered throughout town.

Currently, the non-residential tax base consists of the Portland Pipeline. It runs through the town from south to north. While it pays a fair share of property taxes, it does not offer any employment opportunities within the town.

Otisfield has limited opportunities for economic development. There are no public water and sewer systems and the transportation network is limited. The State highways (Routes 121 and 117) passing through the town are classified as minor collectors by the Maine Department of Transportation. These

highways are not considered to have any potential to support significant economic development. The town has identified two town-owned parcels as potential development sites; these were identified as part of a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) adopted when the pipeline was expanded several years ago. However, the actual potential to use these parcels for development is very limited by other constraints on the property. There is some potential for outdoor recreation related development. Both summer and winter use trails are possibilities as is water sports including swimming, canoeing, kayaking, boating, sailing, and fishing. There is the potential to develop service businesses either centered around these activities or to support the people that would come to avail themselves of the opportunities. Commercial camps and campgrounds are both possibilities.

Over the last 30 years, most of Otisfield workers commuted to Norway, Paris and Oxford for employment. More recently, Lewiston/Auburn and the Portland areas are also places for employment for Otisfield workers. Otisfield is a supplier of workers to the Labor Market Area and beyond.

## **Labor Force**

Since 2000, Otisfield's labor force has increased by 9%. The annual average unemployment rate in Otisfield has been below that of the Bridgton/Paris Market Area. The rate reached 10.4% in 2009.

	<b>Otisfield</b>		<b>Bridgton/Paris LMA</b>	
	2000	2008	2000	2008
Total Labor Force	818	893	13,519	14,170
Employed	798	837	13,028	13,145
Unemployed	20	56	491	1,025
Unemployed Rate	2.4%	6.3%	3.6%	7.2%

In 2000 the greatest number of workers, 28%, was employed in the education, health and social services followed by manufacturing and retail trade at 16% and 12% respectively.

Distribution of Labor Force by Industry 2000				
Industry	Otisfield		Oxford County	
	# of workers	% of Total Employed Labor Force	# of Workers	% of Total Employed Labor Force
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	10	1%	771	3%
Construction	68	9%	2,365	9%
Manufacturing	120	16%	5,160	20%
Wholesale Trade	24	3%	557	2%
Retail Trade	94	12%	3,126	12%
Transportation and warehousing and utilities	22	3%	926	4%
Information	21	3%	410	2%
Finance, insurance and real estate	32	4%	1,040	4%
Professional, scientific, management and administrative	39	5%	1,246	5%
Education, health and social services	210	28%	5,847	23%
Arts, entertainment, recreation and food services	39	5%	2,310	9%
Other services	47	6%	1,073	4%
Public administration	36	5%	855	3%
Total	762		25,686	

U.S. Census

## Work Location: Otisfield Residents

Over the past 20 years, there has been a shift in the location where Otisfield residents work. That shift has been from Norway, Paris and Oxford to places further away including Lewiston/Auburn and the Portland area. This shift is expected to continue over the next five years due to the closing of manufacturing plants in the area. A number of workers are operating businesses from their homes in Otisfield.

### Otisfield Resident Work Locations 1980-2000

Where Otisfield Residents Worked	# of Otisfield Residents Working at the Location-1980	Percentage of Total Resident Workers-1980	# of Otisfield Residents Working at the Location-2000	Percentage of Total Resident Workers-2000
Otisfield	47	12%	62	8%
Auburn/Lewiston	32	8%	73	10%
Casco	12	3%	27	4%
Norway	66	17%	64	9%
Oxford	71	18%	104	14%
Paris	49	13%	76	10%
Portland/S. Portland	22	6%	80	11%
Windham	6	2%	22	3%
Other	84	22%	236	32%

## Means of Transportation to Work

Those in Otisfield that travel to work drive alone and spend about an hour per day traveling. A little bit longer than all Mainers.

Means of Transportation to Work 2009 <sup>1</sup>		
Type	Number	Percent
Car, Truck, Van; Drove Alone	851	81%
Car, Truck, Van; Carpooled	131	13%
Worked at Home/other	62	6%
TOTAL	1,046	
Average Commute Time	33 Minutes	

<sup>1</sup> Estimate provided by the American Community Survey-December 2010

## Regional Economic Development Plans

Otisfield is included in the 2009-2010 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Androscoggin Valley Economic Development District. The Strategy establishes the economic, transportation, and community planning direction for the Androscoggin Valley Economic District.

# **H**OUSING in Otisfield

## **Findings and Conclusions**

- ❖ **Since 2000, there have been approximately 250 permits issued for new residential structures.**
- ❖ **24% of households in Otisfield could not afford the median home in 2008.**
- ❖ **There will be a demand for approximately 120 additional year-round housing units over the planning period.**

## **I**ntroduction

Housing characteristics within a community is an important consideration of the comprehensive plan. The documentation of housing growth trends, availability of housing, its affordability and condition are important planning considerations. This information will allow decisions to be reached concerning the need for additional housing, provisions for affordable housing and the need for a mixture of housing types.

## **H**ousing Trends

Over the past century, Otisfield has evolved from a community based on farm and forestry to a residential community. Most residents work out of town. There are a variety of housing types in town including mobile and manufactured homes, older homes in varying conditions, old farmsteads, new moderate homes, camps that are mostly near lakes and the river, and expensive lakefront properties for both seasonal and year-round use.

In addition to a significant population increase, Otisfield has one of the highest rates of housing growth in the immediate area. Some of the growth is based on the demand for lakefront property, but combined with the year-round population increase, it indicates that Otisfield has become a desirable place to live. One reason may be the availability of relatively inexpensive land in some areas of town.

Since 2000, there were approximately 250 permits issued for new residential structures.

### Housing Growth for Towns in the Area

	1980 Housing Units	1990 Housing Units	2000 Housing Units	2009 Housing Units <sup>1</sup>
Otisfield	587	816	1011	1,160
Norway	2017	2440	2551	2,560
Oxford	1486	1781	1926	2,000
Poland	1509	1895	2316	2,690
Casco	1222	1677	1958	2,330
Harrison	964	1193	1430	1,510
Naples	1462	1946	2381	2,890

<sup>1</sup> Estimate provided by the American Community Survey-December 2010

## Type of Housing Unit

Otisfield's housing supply is comprised primarily of the traditional single-family home. In 2000, 87% of all housing was single-family. Seasonal or second homes comprised 39% of the total housing supply in 2000. The American Community Survey in December 2010 estimated that 420 homes were used seasonally. It is interesting to note that the rate of increase in the number of seasonal or second homes slowed between 1990 and 2000.

### Otisfield Household Units

	1980	1990	2000	2009 <sup>1</sup>	# Change 1990-2000	% Change 1990-2000
<b>Single-Family</b>	331	374	487	602	113	30.2%
<b>Multi-Family</b>	7	13	8	16	-5	-38.5%
<b>Mobile Home</b>	16	76	124	122	48	63.6%
<b>Total Year-Round</b>	354	463	619		156	33.6%
<b>Seasonal</b>	233	353	392	420	39	11.0%
<b>Total</b>	587	816	1,011	1,160	229	23.8%

<sup>1</sup> Estimate provided by the American Community Survey-December 2010

## Owner/Renter Patterns

Rural communities typically have a much larger percentage of owner-occupied dwelling units than renter occupied dwelling units. This is due to the large percentage of the overall housing supply consisting of the single-family home. In 2000, 93% of all housing units were owner-occupied and 7% were renter occupied.

## Housing Conditions

The Comprehensive Plan Update Committee did not undertake a detailed housing conditions survey, the reason being that although scattered substandard housing exists in Otisfield it was not deemed a significant planning issue. However, several indicators of housing conditions from the 2000 Census were examined.

One indicator of the overall physical condition of a community's housing stock can be its age. However, caution must be exercised when age is considered as an indicator of physical condition. Many of Otisfield's older homes are in excellent condition and are assets to the community. The older dwelling units may, however, be in need of energy efficiency and/or electrical upgrading. The housing stock in Otisfield is considerably younger than that of Oxford County due in large part to the many new homes constructed in the past two decades

Housing Stock by Age

Year Built	Otisfield		Oxford County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1990-2000	341	33.5	5318	16.5
1980-1989	186	18.3	5346	16.5
1970-1979	151	14.8	4838	15.0
1960-1969	44	4.3	2686	8.3
1940-1959	122	12.0	4403	13.6
1939 or Earlier	173	17.0	9839	30.5

## Housing Costs

The cost of purchasing or renting a home has increased significantly from 2000 to 2007. Numerous factors led to those increased costs including land costs, construction cost and market demand. Costs have decreased somewhat as the result of a housing bust after 2007. Based on Census information, the cost of housing in Otisfield was greater than in both Oxford County and the State. The 2000 Census reported that the median value of owner-occupied homes was \$101,500 compared to \$82,800 in the County. Monthly rents were slightly greater than overall Oxford County.

2000 Housing Costs					
	Median Value Owner Occupied	Median Monthly Mortgage	30% or more of Income	Median Monthly Rent	30% or more of Income
Otisfield	\$101,500	\$830	41%	\$490	19%
Oxford County	\$82,800	\$785	20%	\$420	29%
State of Maine	\$98,700	\$932	20%	\$497	34%

U.S. Census

## **Rental Rates**

A detailed rental rate survey was not conducted as an element of the comprehensive plan update because rental units comprise a small portion of the town's housing supply. The 2000 census reported the median rent was \$490. In 2008, the Maine State Housing Authority reported the average rent for a two-bedroom unit was \$780 in the Bridgton-Paris Housing Market that includes Otisfield.

## **Affordability/Workforce Housing**

It is important for towns to have a mix of housing types and cost ranges. Having housing that is affordable goes hand-in-hand with economic growth. Workers needed by start up businesses and those employed by the service sector, a growing part of the regional economy, often need affordable housing. Without it, workers may not be available for business start-ups and expansions, and municipal employees may not be able to live in the community.

Further, the quality of the affordable housing is important to the community. Having housing that is reasonably energy efficient and has adequate facilities such as hot water and bathrooms prevents low income families from being forced to live in substandard housing which can lead to blight and further impoverishment of the families.

Affordable/workforce housing means different things to different people. In simple terms, a home or a rent is affordable if a person or family earns enough money to pay for monthly cost for decent, safe and sanitary housing and have sufficient money left over to pay for other living necessities. It is generally accepted that a home owner should not spend more than 28%-33% of income for housing cost that include principle, interest, taxes and insurance. Renters should not spend more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities.

Workforce housing is somewhat a new term in the planning and housing community. It can mean almost any type of housing but is always affordable. It is intended to appeal to key members of the workforce including but not limited to teachers, office workers, factory workers, police officers and the like. Workforce housing is affordable, generally single-family and in or near employment centers rather than in distant rural sprawl locations.

Based on information obtained from the Maine State Housing Authority, the median priced home in Otisfield was affordable to the median income family after 2006. Affordability is measured by an affordability index. An index greater than one means that the median value home is affordable to median income households; an index less than one means that the median value home is unaffordable for median income households.

The Maine State Housing Authority reports that 24% of households in Otisfield could not afford the median home in 2008. This compares to 56% for the Bridgton-Paris Labor Market Area that includes Otisfield. For those households in the Bridgton-Paris Labor Market Area that seek a home in Otisfield, finding an affordable home will be more difficult in that their incomes are some \$15,000 less. There is a need for 15 affordable rental units in Otisfield.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Otisfield - Affordability Index</b>  <b>For Those at Median Income</b></p>					
Year	Index	Median Home Price	Median Income	Income Needed to Afford Median Home Price	Home Price Affordable to Median Income
2004	0.95	\$152,450	\$48,810	\$51,150	\$145,500
2005	0.71	\$213,500	\$49,590	\$69,970	\$151,320
2006	0.98	\$170,500	\$52,370	\$53,610	\$166,560
2007	1.11	\$155,000	\$53,940	\$48,730	\$171,580
2008	1.68	\$108,000	\$57,070	\$33,960	\$181,530

Source: Maine State Housing Authority

Affordable housing opportunities are a regional issue and the amount of need depends on individual town characteristic. At present, there are no active regional affordable housing coalitions. However, Community Concepts provides affordable housing programs.

The town has not enacted any ordinance that stands in the way of the development of affordable housing.

## **Future Housing Demand**

Based on the forecast that year-round population will be in the 1,850-1,900 range, there will be a demand for approximately 120 additional year-round housing units over the planning period. Should the local, regional or national economic conditions change significantly, the demand for additional housing units will also change.

Seasonal or second homes comprised 39% of Otisfield's total housing stock in 2000. It is important to consider future demand for seasonal or second homes when planning for the town. Several factors are important when considering future second home development. They include land availability around lakes and ponds and regional and national economic conditions. Most seasonal and second homes are found along lake and pond shores. New second home development will continue to slow due to land availability, land costs and disposable income. Over the period, some second homes will undergo an evolution from second to year-round and back to seasonal as the result in ownership changes.

## **Future Housing Mix**

Not only is an estimation of total new housing necessary in the comprehensive plan but also the type of year-round housing, owner and rental. Over the next ten years, demand for single-family housing will be greater than for multi-family rental type housing. Elderly housing opportunities will also be needed and will be provided on a regional basis rather than only by Otisfield.

# **T**RANSPORTATION

## **F**indings and Conclusions

- ❖ **The town maintains 49 miles of roads, 30 miles of which are paved and 19 miles are graveled.**
- ❖ **There are roads in town that are inadequate to meet today's travel demands.**

## **I**ntroduction

The location of transportation routes is important to Otisfield's and the Region's development patterns and its overall economic well-being. Otisfield's transportation system includes State Highway 117 that traverses the northern portion of town for 1.3 miles. State Route 121 runs from Casco in the southwest through the center of town to Oxford on the east. The town maintains 49 miles of roads, 30 miles paved and 19 gravel. There are also a number of privately owned roads.

## **H**ighway Classification & Conditions

A rural town's transportation system typically consists of its roadway, bridge and sidewalk systems. This system is extremely important to existing and future development characteristics.

The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) has classified highways based on functions within Otisfield as arterial, collector or local. Brief definitions of the highway functional classifications, as used by MaineDOT, are as follows:

**Arterial Highways:** The most important travel routes in the state. These roads carry high speed, long distance traffic and attract a significant amount of federal funding. Routes 117 and 121 are arterial highways. The MaineDOT has total maintenance responsibility for Route 117. The town is responsible for winter plowing/sanding and MaineDOT is responsible for summer maintenance of Route 121.

**Collector Highways:** They serve as important intracounty travel corridors which connect nearby larger towns or arterial highways. Bolsters Mill Road is a collector highway. As a State aid road, the town is responsible for winter plowing/sanding and MaineDOT is responsible for summer maintenance.

Local Roads: There are 44 miles of local roads that are designed primarily to serve adjacent land areas and usually carry low volumes of traffic. The town is responsible for both summer and winter maintenance of local roads.

Private Roads: There are a number of private roads listed in the Emergency-911 system. Owners of property fronting private roads are responsible for the road's maintenance. Typically, public services such as school bus pickup are not available to residents on private roads.

Examination of local highway conditions is important for several reasons. Road conditions can help direct future development and suggest the need for capital expenditures for reconstruction.

A Road Surface Management System (RSMS) Program has been undertaken in the early 1990's, 2000 and 2005. The RSMS program, which is endorsed by MaineDOT, has been used to evaluate the road conditions and to help develop an improvement plan. The RSMS program is essentially a computer model which accepts a pavement condition input and then develops information about each segment of road under consideration.

The survey indicated that Otisfield is responsible for 25.6 miles of paved roads and 21.3 miles of gravel or dirt roads. The roads vary considerably in width, drainage conditions and surface conditions. There are a number of roads on relatively steep slopes, making maintenance somewhat more difficult and costly. The following table provides an indication of the overall condition of roads and the type of work needed.

**Condition of Roads and the Type of Work Needed.**

Category of Repair	Miles of Road	Percentage of Road Miles by Category of Repair
Paved - Routine	10.8	42.2
Paved - Preventive	7.3	28.6
Paved - Rehabilitation	7.5	29.2
Gravel - Routine	6.5	30.6
Gravel - Preventive	2.9	13.6
Gravel - Rehabilitation	11.9	55.8

In 2005, it was found that there were a number of roads that are in better condition than when the previous two inventories were conducted. Several gravel roads have been paved, and drainage is marginally better on many of the town roads. However, the inventory work indicated that drainage could still be improved greatly. The drainage work that has been done is preventing the condition of pavement from deteriorating at the rate that it seemed to be deteriorating in 1992. However, the shoulder maintenance and drainage work is not protecting the pavement to the extent that it could. In addition, shoulder and drainage work, or lack thereof, may also be adversely impacting lake water quality, and lakes are undoubtedly a significant asset to the town given the high property values around the lakes.

A more objective measure of the observations noted in the above paragraph is to compare the results for the paved roads in 2000 to the paved roads in 2005. An exact comparison is difficult for several reasons, including the subjectivity of the staff that survey the road and the differences in the model. Approximately the same amount of paved roads, about 7.5 miles, still requires significant ditch improvements, and the same amount, 9.4 miles, requires preventive maintenance. However, this latter category includes road segments with High Severity problems. These roads may have required rehabilitation or reconstruction in the previous models, but are now grouped as Preventive Maintenance.

The amount needing rehabilitation or reconstruction has increased from 3.3 miles in 2000 to 7.45 miles today. It should be noted that there were more miles of paved road 2005 (25.5) than there were in 2000 (24.3).

There are also many roads in town that are inadequate to meet today's travel demands, regardless of the pavement condition and drainage needs. Of the 24 miles of paved roads, only 10.2 miles of road are 18 feet wide or greater, and only 5.2 miles are 20 feet wide. All but 0.8 miles of the gravel roads are less than 18 feet wide. Eighteen (18) feet is a standard that should be met for safe travel on any roads besides those serving a neighborhood, and even neighborhood roads need approximately 18 feet of travel way to insure safe emergency access.

There is an appointed Road Study Review Committee charged with making recommendations concerning the best methods to provide road maintenance, winter plowing and repair of the Town's roads.

## Highway Capacities

MaineDOT maintains traffic volume data for Routes 117 and 121 and the Bolsters Mill Road. Typically, these counts are done every three years. However, data may not be available at all locations every three years because data collection points can change over time.

Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts		Year		
Location		1996	2005	2007
Route 121 @ Rayville Road		N.A.	1,520	1,540
Route 117 @ Harrison Town Line		3,340	4,020	3,500
Bolsters Mill Road		N.A.	840	N.A.

Routes 117 and 121 and Bolsters Mill Road have high levels of capacity well beyond its current traffic volumes. Local roads have adequate capacity for current and anticipated traffic volumes.

## Motor Vehicle Crash Data

Maine DOT maintains records of all reportable crashes involving at least \$1,000 damage or personal injury. A report entitled "Maine Accident Report Summary" provides information relating to the location and nature of motor vehicle crashes. One element of the summary report is the identification of "Critical Rate Factor" (CRF), which is a statistical comparison to similar locations in the state. Locations with CRFs of 1.0 or greater and with more than eight crashes within a three-year period are classified as "High Crash Locations" (HCLs).

Based upon information provided by MaineDOT for the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008, there were no HCLs in Otisfield. There are several locations in Otisfield where a number of crashes occurred between 2006 and 2008. These include seven on the Route 117, six crashes on Gore Road from the Oxford/Otisfield town line to North McAllister Road and two crashes at the intersection of Route 121 and Bolsters Mill Road. Most crashes involved running off the road or deer strikes.

## Bridges

There are eight publically owned bridges in Otisfield. Four are steel or wood span type and four are culvert type. All but the Scribners Mill Bridge are owned and maintained by the Maine DOT. Posted bridges for weight limits include the Ryefield Bridge (28,000 lbs) and the Scribners Mill Bridge (6,000 lbs.). The College Swamp Bridge on the Bolsters Mill Road is listed on the MaineDOT Watchlist.

**Otisfield Bridge Inventory and Classification**

Bridge Name	Capital/Maintenance Responsibility	Structure Class	Length (Feet)	Substructure Condition	Superstructure Condition	Deck Condition	Culvert Condition	Inspection Date
Scribner's	Town	Low Use/Redundant	112	Serious	Fair	Fair	Not applicable	7/9/2009
West Twin	MaineDOT	Bridge on State Road	64	Good	Very Good	Good	Not applicable	7/22/2009
Ryefield	MaineDOT	Bridge on Town Way or State Aid Road	98	Very Good	Good	Good	Not applicable	7/22/2009
Coon Road/Route 121	MaineDOT	Culvert	5	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Satisfactory	11/7/1984
Sergeant Brook	MaineDOT	Culvert	4	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Satisfactory	8/13/2003
East Otisfield	MaineDOT	Bridge on Town Way or State Aid Road	25	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Good	8/27/2009
College Swamp	MaineDOT	Minor Span on State Aid Road	23	Poor	Poor	Poor	Not applicable	11/5/2008
Yeaton	MaineDOT	Bridge on Town Way or State Aid Road	37	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Not applicable	8/3/2009

Source: MaineDOT

## Public Transit

Western Maine Transportation Services, Inc. (WMTS) provides “demand response” and fixed-route transportation services to residents of Androscoggin, Franklin and Oxford Counties. Door-to-door (demand response) and fixed-route services are available to the general public. Generally, Otisfield has not been served by these services.

## Aviation

There are no public airports in Otisfield. The nearest airport is the Oxford County Regional Airport located off Route 26 in Oxford. Owned by Oxford County, the airport has a 3,000 foot paved runway. The airport has a fixed-base operator. Otisfield is not on the general flight paths or approach zones.

## **State Highway Improvement Plans**

The MaineDOT updates its Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan every two years. The purpose of the Six-Year Plan is to provide a linkage between the policy-based 20-Year Transportation Plan, the project based Biennial Capital Work Plan and local planning. The 2010-2015 Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan identifies a bridge replacement at College Swamp on the Bolsters Mill Road.

## **Standards for Road Design & Access**

Otisfield has adopted standards for road construction in subdivisions, vehicular access standards for residential and non-residential development and standards for driveway entrance onto all public roads. Subdivision standards include design standards for both public and private roads. In addition, when roads either public or private are to serve a subdivision and are not deemed to have adequate capacity, they must be upgraded by the subdivider. Subdivision and site plan review provisions contain access management standards for access to all roads, internal vehicular circulation and pedestrian circulation. These standards enhance the safety and efficiency of the town's and region's transportation systems.

## **Local Transportation Concerns**

### **Speed**

Route 121 is a major transportation route carrying automobile and truck traffic. The speed of vehicles not only is a concern of other motorists but often is a hindrance to walkers and bicyclists. Speed is also a concern on other roads in Otisfield as well.

### **Route 121 Conditions**

The pavement on portions of Route 121 is unacceptable. This is especially true during the spring thaw.

### **Intersection Safety**

There are a number of intersections onto Route 121 and other local road intersections that are considered unsafe due to visibility, sight distances and intersection angles.

### **Parking**

Off-street parking improvements are needed at the Outpost II and Bolsters Mill Stores.

# **O**UTDOOR RECREATION

## **F**indings and Conclusions

- ❖ **Residents and visitors enjoy the outdoor recreation opportunities available in Otisfield.**
- ❖ **Most private land owners have traditionally allowed public access to their lands for hunting.**
- ❖ **The play field at the town office could be improved to increase its usability.**

## **I**ntroduction

Outdoor recreation opportunities are important to both year-round and seasonal residents and visitors to Otisfield. Most recreation in town is non-facility orientated taking place on waters and woods. The town's water resources and natural environment are conducive to these activities, and private land owners have traditionally allowed public access.

## **O**utdoor Recreation Facilities & Programs

Public outdoor recreation facilities owned and maintained by the town include a multi-purpose field at the town office, walking trails at Heniger Park and a town beach on Pleasant Lake. At the Otisfield Community School there is a playing field, a basketball court, and a playground. The field at the School is used by youth teams. There is a Recreation Committee and a Conservation Committee that are involved in outdoor recreation activities. The play field at the town office could be improved to increase its usability.



*Ball Field/Otisfield Community School*

Along the northwestern shore of Thompson Lake in Otisfield Cove, there is a small area suitable for boat launching. A court ordered right-of-way over a small piece of land provides Otisfield residents with access to the Lake. There are only three parking spaces at the site. There is, however, a boat ramp on Thompson Lake in Oxford that is accessible to Otisfield residents. There is a beach and boat launch site on the northerly shore of Pleasant Lake that the town owns and maintains. There is limited access to both Saturday Pond and Moose Pond. Both sites are minimally maintained with most of the work done by people who use them. The access on Moose Pond has significant winter use by snowmobilers. There are no designated public access points on the Crooked River in Otisfield. However, access could be gained at bridge sites at Bolsters, Scribner Mills and Twin Bridges.



***Pleasant Lake***

Heniger Park is located between Route 121 and Pleasant Lake and was donated to the town over 40 years ago. The 100-acre area was donated with the intent that the Selectmen determine use that would be in the best interest of the town. No land could be sold. Beginning in early to mid 1960s and continuing into the early 1970s, the town designated a road close to the shoreline and divided the shore frontage and a small strip of land on the other side of the road into lots to be leased for camps. Leases were for ten-year periods but could be renewed four times, meaning that the leases will expire starting soon in 2013-2014. There is considerable available land in the remaining portion of the Park that may be better used to benefit the town and its citizens. Recently, a trail system has been developed at the Park.

## **Hunting and Fishing**

Wildlife both of game and non-game species are plentiful in Otisfield. Hunting in the area follows the Maine hunting seasons. The game includes deer, rabbits, partridge, turkey and duck. Most private land owners have traditionally allowed public access to their lands for hunting.

The Crooked River has been identified by the Maine Rivers Study and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as one of the highest priority fishery resources in the State and as the highest quality river fishery in Southern Maine. The River supports one of only four known indigenous populations of landlocked Atlantic salmon in Maine. Thompson Lake is known for both open water and

ice fishing for cold water species. The other lakes, ponds and streams support both cold and warm water fisheries.

## **T**rail Systems

The Otisfield Trail Blazer Snowmobile Club maintains some 36 mile of Trails in Otisfield. The trail system connects to trails in Harrison, Norway, Oxford, Casco and to ITS 89. Horses, bicycles, snowmobiles, and ATVs all use trails that have been created along the pipeline that stretches the length of Otisfield from north to south. A trail system has been developed at Heniger Park.



*Otisfield Trail Blazer Groomer*

## **W**estern Foothills Land Trust/Nature Conservancy

The Western Foothills Land Trust is active in the Region. It is committed to the conservation and preservation of native ecosystems, watersheds, farm and forest lands and scenic landscapes in Western Maine. The Trust has participated in the Upper Headwaters Alliance (Crooked River watershed) aimed at protecting the water quality and habitat resources of the Crooked River watershed.

The State of Maine/Bureau of Public Lands holds a 3,200 acre conservation easement on the Jugtown Plains. The land is owned and managed by Hancock Lumber.

# **W**ATER RESOURCES

## **F**indings and Conclusions

- ❖ **Lakes and Ponds are one of the town's most important natural resources.**
- ❖ **The Crooked River supports one of only four known indigenous populations of landlocked Atlantic salmon in Maine.**
- ❖ **The greatest threats to the continued good water quality of all surface waters is from non-point sources caused by improper land management practices that create erosion of soil.**

## **S**urface Water

There are numerous streams draining the hills and valleys of Otisfield. All streams flow into area lakes or the Crooked River. Lakes are one of the town's most important water resources. They provide habitat for fish and wildlife and recreation for residents and visitors. Shoreline development is also an important part of the town's tax base. Four major lakes are located wholly or partly in Otisfield. These lakes are located in the central and easterly portions of town. The westerly part of town drains into the Crooked River, which is a major tributary of Sebago Lake, one of the State's premiere lake resources and the source of drinking water for Greater Portland.

**Thompson Lake:** The watershed of Thompson Lake covers 47.4 square miles or 30,336 acres in Casco, Norway, Otisfield, Oxford and Poland. Over 9,500 acres of that watershed, almost one third, are in Otisfield. The surface area of the lake itself is 4,275 acres, and it has a mean depth of 41 feet. The lake supports salmon, togue, smelt, small and large mouth bass, cusk and pickerel. The water quality in Thompson Lake as well as the quality of the water entering the lake is monitored closely by the Thompson Lake Environmental Association. The Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program rates the Lake as one of the 10 best lakes in Maine for water quality. Thompson Lake is also recognized as an "at risk" lake because of the extent of shoreline development and the lake's slow flushing rate. Variable leaf milfoil has been growing in the Lake for more than 20 years. Since the Lake was entirely surveyed in 2002, Association monitors have found five new areas of infestation. The Thompson Lake Environmental Association has had a milfoil eradication program since 2005 that has included benthic barriers, hand pulling and a milfoil harvester.

The Lake is a significant regional resource serving residents from a wide area outside the bordering towns. Thompson Lake is also a significant attraction for visitors to the state and could be considered an important statewide resource both because of its fishery and its economic value to the area.

***Pleasant Lake:*** The watershed of Pleasant Lake covers 9.8 square miles or 6,300 acres in Casco and Otisfield. Nearly 2,300 acres are in Otisfield. The surface area of the lake is 1,312 acres, and the lake has a mean depth of 30.7 feet. The lake is the water supply for the Wade Fish Hatchery in Casco. It is managed for warm and cold water fish, including salmon, brook trout and brown trout, small mouth bass, perch, and pickerel. Pleasant Lake has excellent water quality. The potential for nuisance algal blooms is low. Variable leaf milfoil has been documented at the outlet of Pleasant Lake and inlet from Parker Pond.



***Thompson Lake***

***Saturday Pond:*** The watershed of Saturday Pond covers 1.64 square miles or approximately 1,050 acres and is entirely within Otisfield. The surface area of the pond is 180 acres, and it has a mean depth of 9.8 feet. The pond is managed as a largemouth bass, perch and pickerel fishery. Water quality monitoring data have been collected since 1984. The water quality of Saturday Pond is considered to be slightly above average.

***Moose Pond:*** The watershed area of Moose Pond covers 1.62 square miles or approximately 1,037 acres and is entirely within Otisfield. The surface area of the pond is 160 acres, and it has a maximum depth of 16 feet. The pond supports warm water species of fish such as bass, pickerel and perch. Water quality monitoring data have been collected since 2000. The Pond is shallow with high color. In general, lakes of this nature have stable water quality and internal loading of phosphorus is low.

**Little Pond:** The surface area of Little Pond is 23 acres. At this time water quality data are not available.

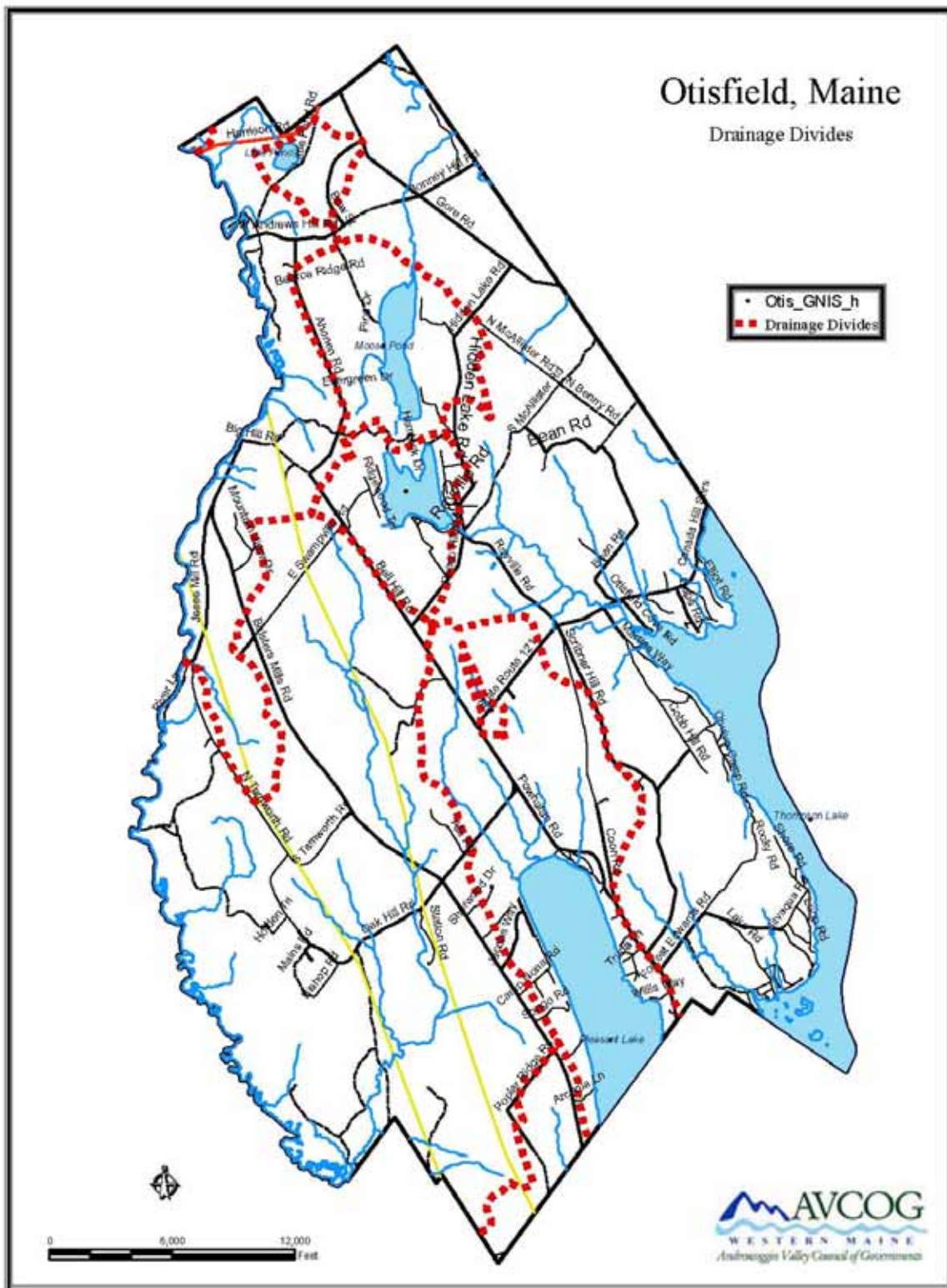
Phosphorus is a naturally occurring element. In an undisturbed environment, it will tightly bind to soil and organic matter for plant use. Natural systems conserve and recycle nutrients and water. Runoff from an undisturbed, healthy forest is relatively low in quantity and high in quality. Land development changes the natural landscape in ways that alter the normal cycle. The removal of vegetation, smoothing the land surface, compaction of soils and creation of impervious surfaces combine to reduce the amount of precipitation stored and retained, and drastically increases the amount of water running off the land. The increased runoff from disturbed lands carries higher concentrations of nutrients including phosphorus. The increased runoff also exacerbates erosion and sedimentation problems.

To control phosphorus, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection has created a methodology for controlling phosphorous input into lakes. The methodology results in the following table of allowable phosphorus loading to the various lakes, the watersheds of which are located in Otisfield.

	Drainage Area in Otisfield	Area Available for Development	Growth Factor	Area Likely to be Developed	Pounds of Phosphorus Allowed from Otisfield	Water Quality Category	Level of Protection	Acceptable Increase in ppb concentration	Phosphorus Allocation (#/acre)
	DDA	AAD	GF	AAD*GF	F	WQC	LOP	C	P
Little Pond	340	315	.25	79	2.6	Mod-sen	m	1.0	.033
Moose Pond	1,153	1,053	.25	263	10.18	mod-sen	m	1.0	.039
Pleasant Lake	2,841	2,541	.25	889	55.89	outstanding	h	.5	.031
Saturday Pond	835	765	.25	191	9.17	mod-sen	h	.75	.036
Sebago Lake	11,986	10,986	.3	3,296	357.7	outstanding	h	.5	.054
Thompson Lake	8,806	8,056	.3	2,417	143.6	outstanding	h	.5	.030

In addition to using the above phosphorus allocation table to review development under the site plan review ordinance and the subdivision ordinance, other protection measures can be implemented to protect lakes, rivers and streams. Important measures include buffers around all water bodies, and both temporary and permanent erosion control for all construction and land disturbance activities.

The following map identifies watershed boundaries. Watershed boundaries are identified by connecting points of highest elevation around a body of water--that is, all the land within the watershed drains to the body of water, and all the land outside the watershed drains somewhere else.



***Crooked River:*** The Crooked River forms the western border of Otisfield and flows from its headwaters in Songo Pond in Albany, and is the largest tributary of Sebago Lake. The latter is the source of water to the state's largest water utility in Portland. The 275 square mile watershed is predominantly forest land. Under the State of Maine surface water classification system, the River is classified "AA" or highest classification.

The Maine Rivers Study identified the Crooked River as having significant river related natural and recreational values. The study pointed out that, although the river is paralleled by a paved road along its upper segment, it has remained as one of the least developed rivers in southwestern Maine. The study also noted its scenic value as well as the presence of an important brook trout and landlocked salmon fishery. The Crooked River has been identified by the Maine Rivers Study and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as one of the highest priority fishery resources in the State and as the highest quality river fishery in Southern Maine. The River supports one of only four known indigenous populations of landlocked Atlantic salmon in Maine. The study also points out that the Crooked River offers a variety of canoe trip possibilities through smooth water to rapids. The stretch running from North Waterford to Scribners Mill is noted as an especially good white-water run.



***Crooked River***

***Dead Hole Brook:*** A tributary of the Crooked River, Dead Hole Brook has a small drainage area that is primarily wooded. Under the State of Maine surface water classification system, the Brook is classified "AA".

***College Swamp, Middle and Smith Brooks:*** These three brooks drain a large portion of south central Otisfield. As they are tributaries to the Crooked River, they have an "AA" water quality classification. These watersheds are primarily forested with some open fields and residential development.

***Little Pond Outlet:*** This stream flows from Little Pond for approximately 1.2 miles to the Crooked River. Under the State of Maine surface water classification system, the Brook is classified "AA". Its watershed is mostly forested.

***Sargent Brook:*** From Moose Pond, Sargent Brook flows to Greeley Brook in Oxford. A short segment of Greenley Brook flows through Otisfield. Both Brooks have a "B" water quality classification.

***Sucker Brook:*** Flowing from Saturday Pond to Thompson Lake, it has a length of approximately 2.2 miles. It has been assigned water quality classification of "B", the third highest.

The greatest threats to the continued good water quality of all surface waters is from non-point sources caused by improper land management practices that create erosion of soil. Invasive plants are becoming a major concern in relation to water quality. In 2009, the Town enacted a new Shoreland Zoning Ordinance that complies with the most recent guidelines adopted by the Board of Environmental Protection. Subdivision and site plan review standards include provisions for control of erosion and sediment and phosphorus.

There are lake associations for Pleasant Lake, Saturday Pond and Thompson Lakes. Water quality monitoring by the associations is conducted on all lakes and ponds except Little Pond.

The town has partnered with lake associations to identify and correct run-off problems in lake watersheds as well as assuring that town road improvements minimize erosion and run-off of sedimentation into water bodies.

## **Ground Water**

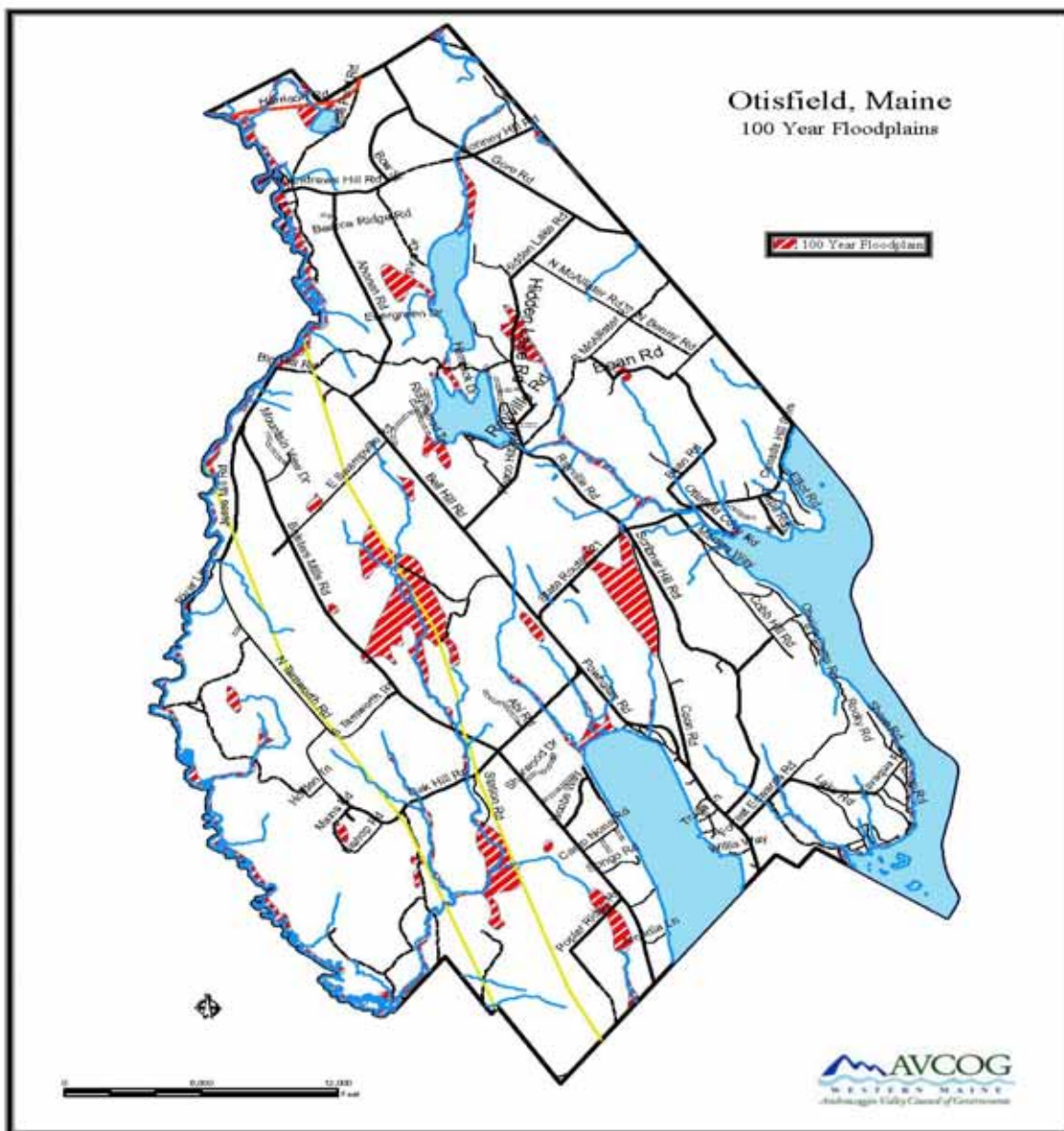
Otisfield has three sand and gravel aquifers either in the town or crossing the town's lines and are shown on the following map. One of the three is located at Otisfield Cove. The development on this aquifer is fairly heavy due to the location, although there are no apparent sources of ground water contamination other than subsurface disposal systems. Another aquifer crosses the Otisfield/Oxford line in the northeastern edge of Otisfield. This is part of the large aquifer that runs from West Paris to Gray and is associated with the Little Androscoggin River. Little development has occurred on this aquifer in Otisfield. The other aquifer in Otisfield runs along nearly the entire western border along the Crooked River. Within Otisfield, there are no apparent sources of contamination. However, just south of Otisfield in Casco and Naples there are several potential sources, but these do not pose a threat to Otisfield. There is some development on this aquifer from Bolsters Mills toward Twin Bridges, but the remaining portion in Otisfield is relatively undeveloped.



## Floodplains

The major floodplains border parts of the Crooked River, Smith Brook, Sucker Brook, and College Swamp. There are narrow, less significant floodplains bordering other parts of these water bodies as well as the other wetlands and the ponds and lakes in town. Within the floodplains, development is limited to single-family residences and roads and bridges. Any construction must comply with the floodplain management ordinance as amended in 2009. The ordinance is administered and enforced by the code enforcement officer.

Otisfield participates in the National Flood Insurance Program that allows property owners that are located in the 100-year floodplain to purchase flood insurance. In 2008, there were nine insurance policies issued with a total coverage of \$1,372,300. Since 1978, there have been five claims with a payout of \$23,850.



# Critical Natural Resources

## Findings and Conclusions

- ❖ **Wetlands in Otisfield play significant roles in wildlife habitat as well as water quality for the surface water in the town and region.**
- ❖ **Along the Crooked River, there is an extensive sand and gravel deposit that is mapped by the Maine Geological Survey as an aquifer.**
- ❖ **The natural resources of Otisfield are an integral part of the town's economic, social and cultural heritage.**

## Introduction

Otisfield is made up of 28,705 acres or 44.85 square miles of land. In the year 2000, Otisfield had 1,011 housing units, which at one acre each would occupy 1,011 acres or 3.5% of the total acreage. Therefore, the town is approximately 96% open space. The natural resources of Otisfield are an integral part of the town's economic, social and cultural heritage. These resources provide for economic and recreational opportunities and must be treated with diligence and respect.

## Topography

Topography refers to the general landform of an area. Relief and slope are the two most important factors when considering topography. Relief reflects the height above sea level, relative to the surroundings. Local relief in Otisfield ranges from around 300 feet above sea level along the Crooked River to 890 feet above sea level on top of Scribner Hill. There is a 560-foot difference between the highest and the lowest points. Most of Otisfield is quite hilly, ranging between these two elevations. The flat areas consist of mainly floodplains, wetlands, and the sand and gravel aquifers.

The steepness or flatness of the land is called slope. Development on steep slopes can cause environmental degradation. Construction and maintenance of development becomes quite expensive on them. Slopes over 8% present both environmental and cost constraints. Slopes over 20% are extremely sensitive and present even greater cost constraints. Over 2,700 acres, approximately 10% of the town land area, have slopes greater than 15%. Notable areas of steep slopes include The Pinnacle, Nutting Ledge, portions of Scribner Hill and Canada Hill, and the ridge that runs from Porcupine Hill north along the Crooked River nearly to the northern border of town. Several of these areas have slopes in excess of 20%.

## **Soils & Geology**

The soils in Otisfield and the region were formed by glaciers that covered the area thousands of years ago. The vast majority of soils in Otisfield are glacial tills; these are soils formed by the glacial actions of grinding and pulverizing of the surface as the glacier moved across the area. The soils range from poorly drained to well drained. Most are capable of supporting a variety of development depending on the slope; the somewhat poorly drained and poorly drained soils having limitations for on site septic systems. Many of the very poorly drained soils exist in mapped wetlands. There are also areas that are shallow to bedrock. These soils usually occur on the top of hills and on steep slopes.

Along the Crooked River, there is an extensive sand and gravel deposit that is mapped by the Maine Geological Survey as an aquifer. These soils are deep sands and gravels that were deposited by flowing water as the glacier receded from the area. They range from very coarse to fine silts. Close to the Crooked River, there are pockets of alluvial soils deposited by floods over thousands of years. These deposits are not extensive and have no significant value to the town.

The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service has mapped soil types in Otisfield, and the information is presented in a Soil Survey Report by that agency. The soil types found in Otisfield are Hermon, Paxton, Peru, Windsor, and the wetlands consist of mainly Sebago Mucky Peat. These soil types were formed by glacial activity in the past, along with all soils found in Maine.

## **Wetlands**

Wetlands provide numerous natural benefits including waterfowl and fish breeding sites and habitat and wildlife habitat, flood control, natural water purification, and recreation.

Otisfield has a number of wetlands as shown on the following map. The two largest are College Swamp and Coon Road Swamp. Several others are associated with Moose and Saturday Ponds and the rest are associated with various brooks. The two largest wetlands in Otisfield play significant roles in wildlife habitat as well as in water quality for the surface water in the town and region.



*Coon Road Swamp*

Under the Shoreland Zoning Law, open freshwater wetlands of ten acres or more require shoreland zoning. There are 17 wetlands in Otisfield that are zoned under the Shoreland Zoning law.

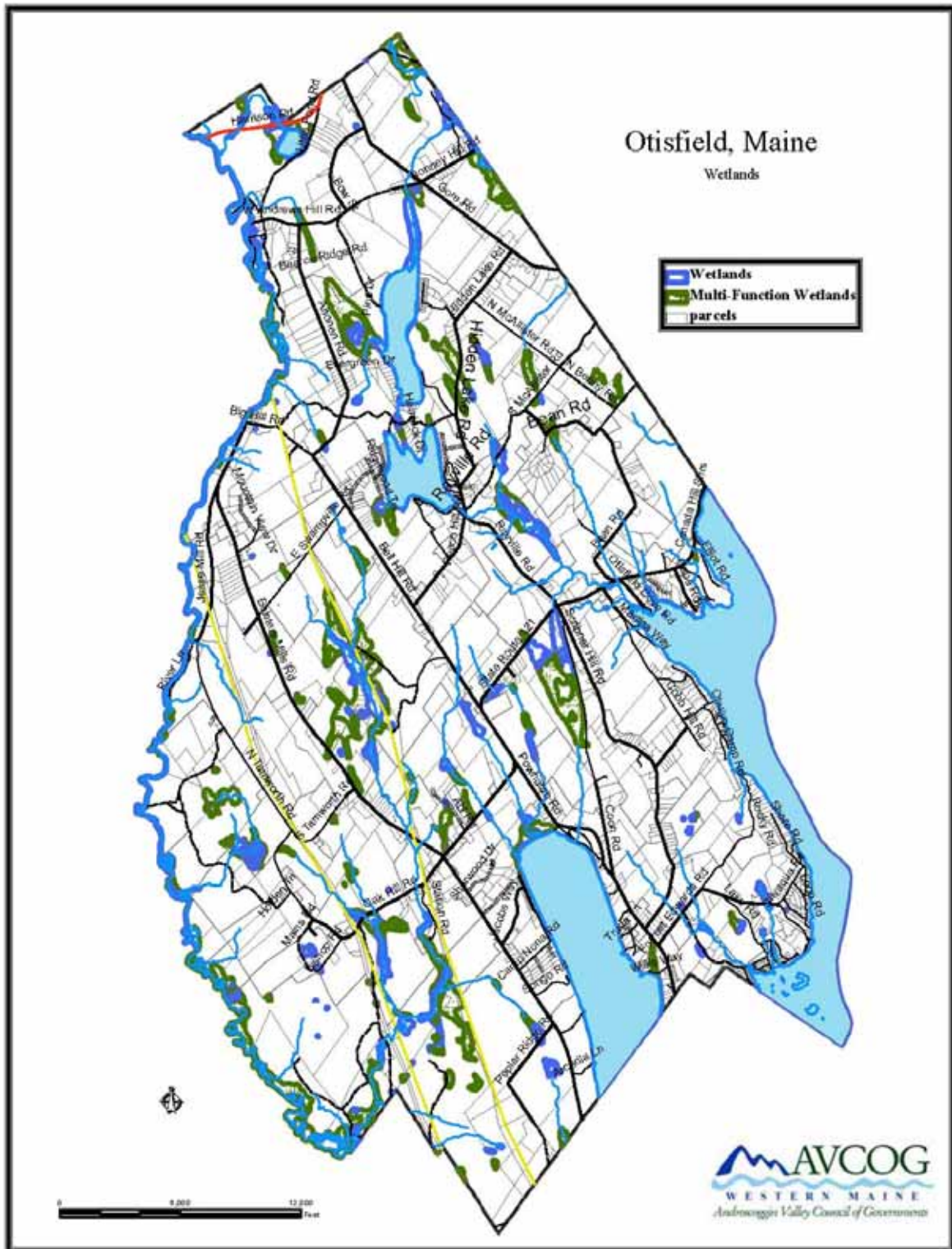
Multi-function wetlands are those that provide three or more of the following functions: floodflow alteration, sedimentation retention, plant, animal and fish habitat, and cultural value. There are 11 multi-function wetlands in Otisfield that provide for floodflow alteration, sedimentation retention, and plant, animal and fish habitat.

## **V**ernal Pools

Vernal pools are temporary to semi-permanent pools occurring in shallow depressions that typically fill during the spring or fall and may dry up during the summer or drought years. They provide the primary breeding habitat for wood frogs, spotted and blue-spotted salamanders, fairy shrimp and other biota, which are adapted to temporary, fishless waters. Amphibians are site specific and return to the pools from which they emerged to breed, just as Salmon return to the rivers where they were spawned. They also provide important feeding and resting areas for other animals, including several of the state's rare and endangered species, along with moose, bear, deer, mink and migrating spring birds and waterfowl. It is crucial to these animals survival that these vernal pools be protected.

In 2007, Maine adopted legislation to regulate a subset of vernal pools that meet certain biological and hydrological criteria as Significant Wildlife Habitat.

As of September 1, 2007, The Maine Department of Environmental Protection began to regulate disturbances around Significant Vernal Pools under the Natural Resource Protection Act. Development activity within 250 feet of a Significant Vernal Pool now requires a DEP Permit.



The new State law puts the burden of proof on developers and individual landowners. There is no State map or list of vernal pools. Unless vernal pools are proactively identified and mapped, the DEP rules state that Significant Vernal Pools can only be identified by trained individuals during the peak spring breeding season. Under this rule, development will have to be postponed until a spring assessment can be made or the landowner may begin development at any time if they proceed as if the pool were Significant, thereby adhering to the regulatory limits on development within 250-foot zone.

The Otisfield Conservation Committee is in the initial stages of studying and surveying vernal pool resources, with special attention to identify pools that meet the biological criteria for Significant Vernal Pools. The Committee's hope is to encourage a more transparent process that will: 1. avoid loss of time and money for private landowners by way of free vernal pool surveys, 2. enable better-informed planning at a town-wide level, and 3. Encourage conservation at the local level that will serve to complement the top-down regulatory approach used by Federal and State agencies.

## **Wildlife & Fisheries**

Wildlife should be considered a natural resource similar to surface waters or forest land. Our wildlife species are a product of the land and, thus, are directly dependent on the land base for habitat. Although there are many types of habitats important to our numerous species, there are three which are considered critical: water resources and riparian habitats, essential and significant wildlife habitats and large undeveloped habitat blocks.

In addition to providing nesting and feeding habitat for waterfowl and other birds, wetlands are used in varying degrees by fish, beaver, muskrats, mink, otter, raccoon and deer. Each wetland type consists of plant, fish and wildlife associations specific to it. Seven wetland areas, as shown on the following map, have been rated by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as having high or moderate waterfowl and wading habitat value.

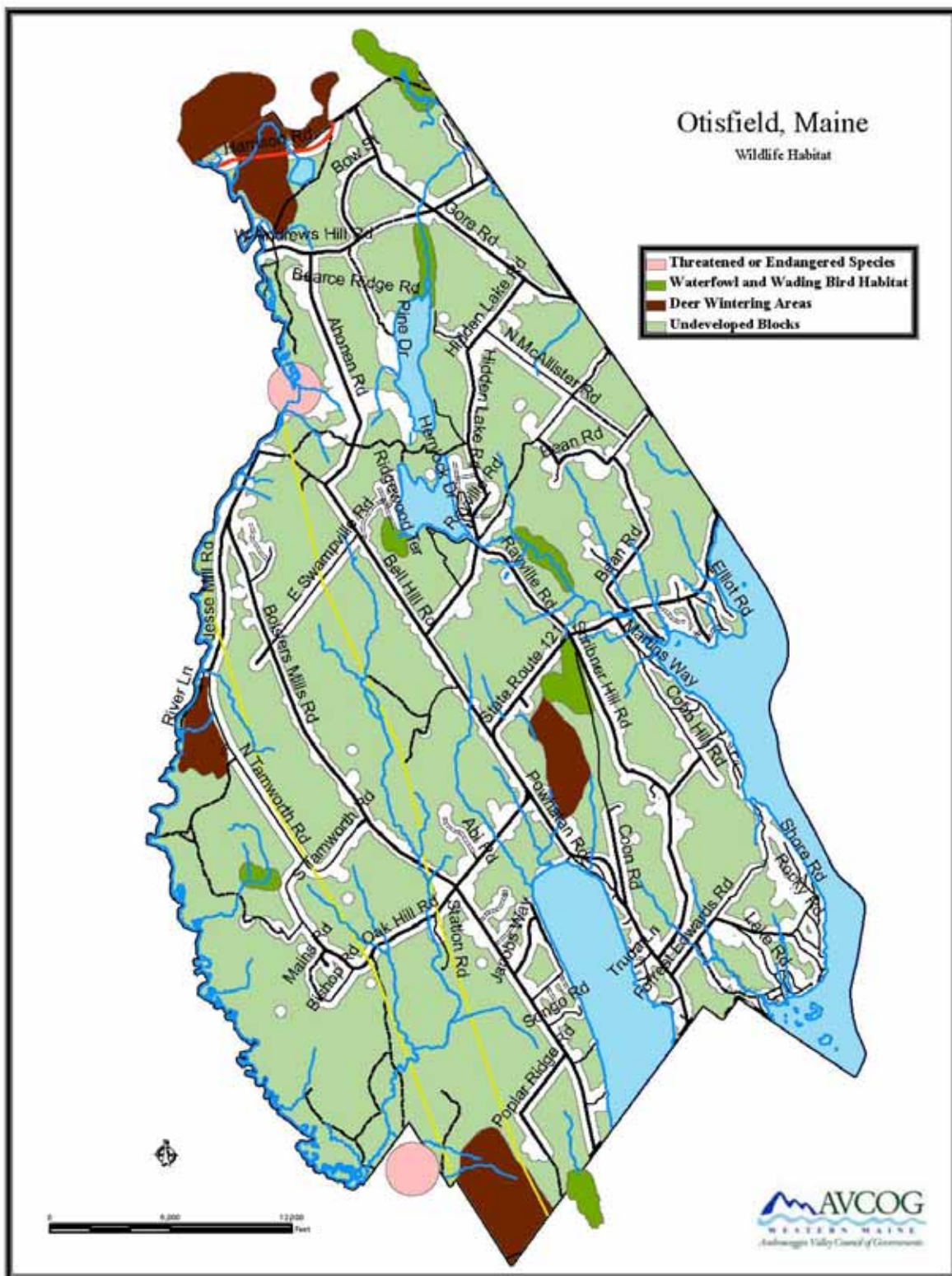
Riparian habitat is the transitional zone between open water or wetlands and the dry or upland habitats. It includes the banks and shores of streams, rivers and ponds and the upland edge of wetlands. Land adjacent to these areas provides travel lanes for numerous wildlife species. Buffer strips along waterways provide adequate cover for wildlife movements, as well as maintenance of water temperatures critical to fish survival. Much riparian habitat exists in Otisfield.

While deer range freely over most of their habitat during spring, summer and fall, deep snow cover (over 18 inches) forces them to seek out areas which provide protection from deep snow and wind. These areas commonly known as deer yards or deer wintering areas can vary from year to year or within a given year but most are traditional in the sense that they are used year after year. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has mapped seven deer wintering areas in Otisfield. The two largest are found in the south west corner of town and west of Coon Swamp.

Large undeveloped habitat blocks are relatively unbroken areas that include forest, grassland/agricultural land and wetlands. Unbroken means that the habitat is crossed by few roads and has relatively little development and human habitation. There are two types of undeveloped habitat blocks in Otisfield. The first are forested blocks that are less than 300 feet from other non-forested habitat or less than 500 acres. These blocks contain a greater edge to interior habitat ratio. The second type is forested blocks greater than 300 feet from other non-forested habitat and greater than 500 acres. Both types of these undeveloped habitat blocks are needed by animals that have large home ranges such as bear, bobcat, fisher and moose.

In the southwest part of Town, high value plant and animal habitats have been identified by the Beginning with Habitat Program. These include habitat for the Acadian Swordgrass Moth and Pitch Pine-Heath Barren locally known as the Jugtown Plains. The pitch pine-heath barren is on a sandy outwash plain, part of a glacial outwash plain rising to approximately 300 feet in elevation to the east of the Crooked River. The open canopy consists primarily white pine, pitch pine and gray birch. The understory consists of a heath shrub layer dominated by blueberry.

The surface waters of Otisfield offer many opportunities for sport fishery. The Crooked River is known for its landlocked Atlantic salmon. Thompson Lake attracts those seeking salmon and other species. Other ponds support both warm and cold water species. Smaller brooks and streams also provide fishing opportunities.



## **Scenic Resources**

When one travels the roads through Otisfield, many attractive hills and valleys will be seen. On the top of almost every hill, the surrounding hills and distant mountains (including Mt. Washington in New Hampshire) can be seen. If views are to be preserved, there are two important aspects to consider. The first is the location from which the view is seen, and second, the area that is viewed. Views of note were mapped for the 1991 comprehensive plan. Participants at the public forums noted the many views and, in particular, were interested in preserving the view from Peaco Hill.

Each of the views were assessed by using a methodology prepared by AVCOG, based on three attributes, (1) distance of vista or view shed, (2) Uniqueness, and (3) Accessibility. Each attribute was assigned a point--1 being the worst and 3 being the best. Additionally, for each vista the accessibility was determined. Accessibility in this case is the ability to stop or pull over at a particular vista to enjoy the view without much trouble or without causing traffic problems. A listing of each scenic vista can be seen in the following table.



***View of Allen Hill from Gore Road***

**Table I – 1**  
**Significant Scenic Vistas In Otisfield, 1990**

Total Points	Scenic Site	Distance	Access.	Uniqueness
9	Scribner Hill Hankins	Unlim.	Good	White Mts., Bell Hill Church, Oxford Hills, Thompson Lake
5	Scribner Hill Bundys Orchards	Unlim.	Fair	White Mts., Oxford Hills
6	Scribner Hill Backside	Unlim.	Fair	Casco, Pleasant Lake
9	Pleasant lake Public Beach	Unlim.	Good	Town Beach
6	Coon Road Swamp Rt. 121	.5 mile	Fair	Fall Foliage, Wildlife
7.5	Cobb Hill – pottle	Unlim.	Fair	Thompson Lake
9	Otisfield Cove – Cobb Hill to Pond Cove	Unlim.	Good	Pleasant Lake
8	Rt. 121 – Outpost Area	Unlim.	Good	Thompson Lake to Oxford
8	Bean Road BAR/Mosher	Unlim.	Fair	Fall Foliage
9	Peaco Hill – Kanes	Unlim.	Good	
7	Willow Tree – Harlan Swamp	Unlim.	Good	Pleasant Mt., White Mts.
7	Gore – Lower			
9	Gore – Upper	Unlim.		
8	Bow Street	Unlim.		
6	Ryefield Bridge – Crooked River	.25 mile	Fair	
6	Twin Bridges	.25 mile	Good	
8	Bolsters Mills	Immediate	Good	Village View
8	Bell Hill	Unlim.	Good	Surrounding Mts.
4	Dyers Ice Pond	.25 mile	Fair	Fall Foliage, Wildlife
6	Rt. 121 – Casco Rd.	Unlim.	Fair	Pleasant Mt., White Mt.
9	Arcadia Farm	Unlim.	Good	Old Farmstead, White Mts.
4	Scribners Mills	Immediate	Poor	Old Mill, Rapids in River
7	Bolsters Mills Road	.5 mile – Unlim.	Fair	White Mts.
4	Rayville Mills	Immediate	Fair	Waterfall, 2 dams, David Ray,s Mill & Holden Mills

SOURCE: Otisfield Comprehensive Planning Committee Field Work 1989

# **A**griculture & Forest Resources

## **F**indings and Conclusions

- ❖ **Although agriculture is not a significant part of the town's land use pattern, there are fields scattered throughout the town that are mainly used for hay.**
- ❖ **Forests in Otisfield support the region's wood product industries, protect water quality and are major factors in the town's rural character.**

## **I**ntroduction

Agriculture and forest lands support the Region's economy and help create the rural nature of Otisfield.

## **A**gricultural Resources

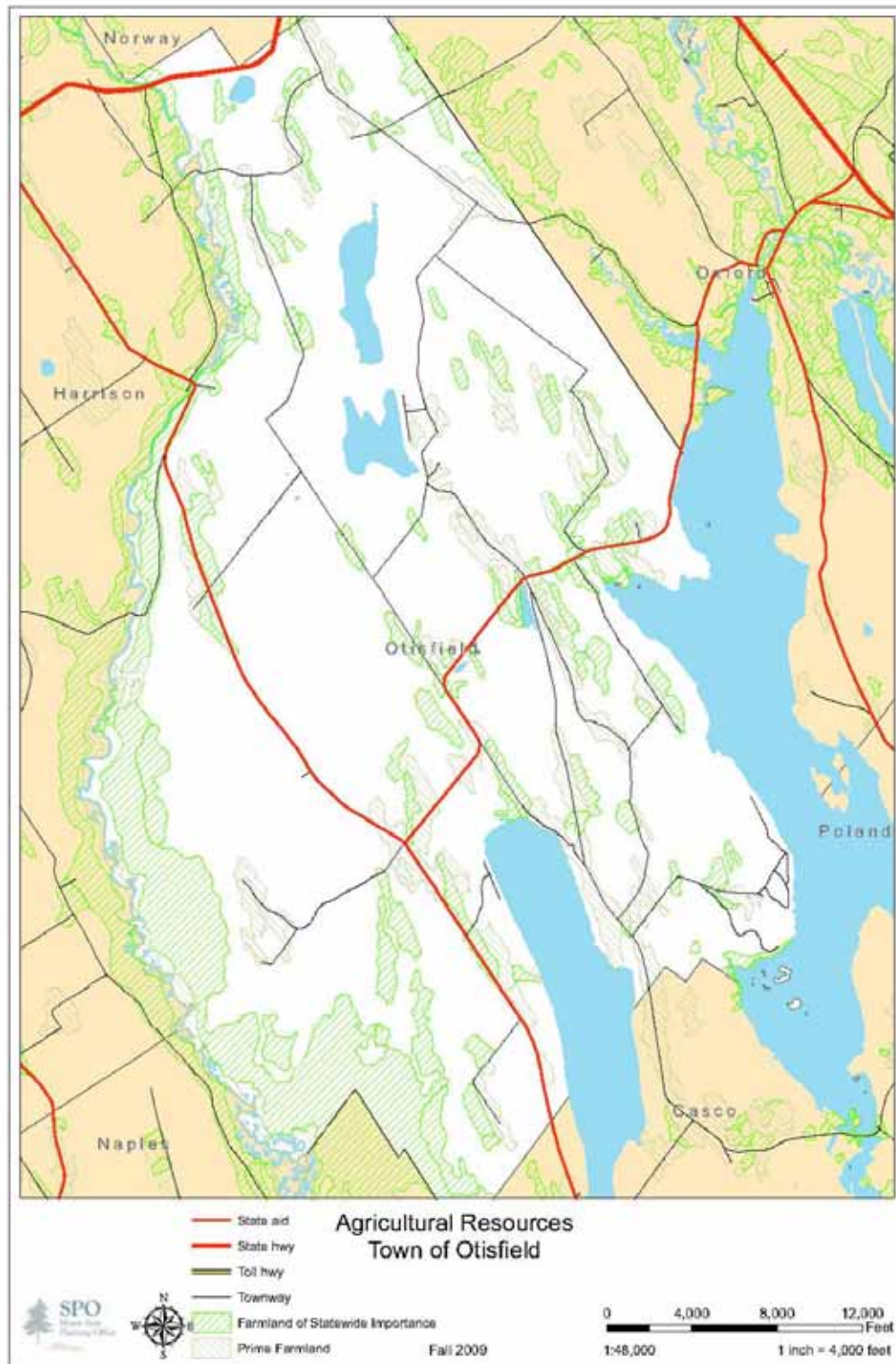
In 2007, Oxford County had 545 farms with the average farm size of 126 acres. Over the past 15 years the number of farms increased from 358 to 545 but the average farm size decreased from 180 acres to 126 acres. The primary agricultural products in the county are vegetables, fruits and dairy products.

There are presently no farms that could be considered as commercial in Otisfield. Although agriculture is not a significant part of the town's land use pattern, there are fields scattered throughout the town that mainly grow hay and blueberries. These green, open spaces contribute to the rural atmosphere of Otisfield and provide edge habitat for wildlife.

Another aspect of farming that has become more prevalent in recent years is small or hobby farm operations. They provide a source of second income for some residents.

Both prime farmland soils and farmland soils of statewide importance exist in Otisfield. Some areas of these soils are used for agricultural purposes, some are forested and other areas have been developed for non-agricultural uses.

In 2008, there were two parcels totaling 156 acres registered under the Farm Land Tax Program. These holdings comprised 34 acres of cropland and 122 acres of woodland. In 1988, there was no land registered under the program. There is an additional 22 acres registered in the Open Space Tax Program.





***Community of the Resurrection Farm***

## **F**orest Resources

The vast majority of Otisfield is forested. The land is divided into tracts ranging from 10 acres to 1,500 acres. Of about 2,400 parcels, 132 of them are over 50 acres and 80 range from 50 to 100 acres. Many of the forested parcels have been actively worked during the past two decades. In 2009, there were 7,175 acres in 88 parcels classified under the Tree Growth Tax Law. Hancock Lumber has placed a large parcel in the southwest corner in a conservation easement. The number of acres in the Tree Growth Tax Law Program increased since 1988 when there were 5,970 acres enrolled on 68 parcels. The Maine Forest Service reports that between 1991 and 2007 there were 430 timber harvests on 13,780 acres of land in Otisfield. Selective harvest accounted for 11,400 acres of all timber harvest and the average harvest area was 32 acres.

Forests in Otisfield support the region's wood product industries, protect water quality and are major factors in the town's rural character. The most significant threats to commercial forest land are lack of markets, poor management and the creation of land parcels that are too small to be suitable for commercial forestry practices.



# **P**ublic Facilities and Services

## **F**indings and Conclusions

- ❖ **In the near future, the town office will need more usable space.**
- ❖ **Since 2005, there has been a 16% decline in Otisfield students enrolled in public schools.**

## **I**ntroduction

Otisfield provides needed facilities and services to its year-round and seasonal residents in an efficient and cost effective manner. The town has benefited from participating with other towns and regional organizations to provide public services. Those arrangements will continue and increase in the future.

## **P**ublic Administration

The Town of Otisfield has a selectman form of government with three selectmen who are elected for three-year terms. The selectmen also serve as tax assessors and overseers of the poor. The road commissioner is an elected official. There is an appointed administrative assistant and appointed town clerk that also serves as the treasurer, tax collector and registrar of voters.

Other public officials, committees and boards include: Oxford Hills School District Board of Directors; recreation committee; conservation commission; finance committee; scholarship committee; ordinance and policy review committee; road committee; planning board; appeals board; code enforcement officer/plumbing inspector; health officer; sexton; fire chief; civil emergency preparedness director; and animal control officer.

## **Public Facilities**

Otisfield has a central town office located on Route 121 that houses all municipal government facilities. There is also a community hall located on Route 121 that is used for public meetings and social gatherings. These facilities are located less than one mile apart near the area traditionally considered the East Otisfield village.



***Otisfield Town Office***

The town office was converted from the old school and is reasonably adequate for the services offered. There is a meeting room on the main floor which is accessible by a ramp built soon after the building was converted. There is a large meeting room in the basement, but it is not handicapped accessible from the upper floor or the primary parking area. There has been mold mitigation in the basement. It is accessible from the outside. A vault for the storage of town records was recently added on the basement level of the town office. In the near future, the town office will need more usable space.



***Otisfield Community Hall***

The community hall has needed substantial work. There is no foundation; the building has an old furnace system that does not provide adequate heat. A new well has been drilled and handicapped access constructed. Additional improvements are in the works.

## **Public Safety**

### **Fire Protection**

Otisfield has a paid call fire department with about 30 members. The town has three fire stations located on Spurrs Corner, which is the largest of the three, the Gore Road, and in East Otisfield. Average response call time is eight minutes. The Department's dispatching is provided by the Oxford County Regional Communications Center that serves all of Oxford County fire, EMS and law enforcement agencies. The Fire Department has automatic mutual aid agreements with Casco, Harrison, Norway, Oxford and Poland.



***Spurs Corner Fire Station***

**Fire Department Equipment  
2010**

Equipment	Year	General Condition
Engine 1- Ford F-800 E-One Class A Pumper	1996	Good
Engine 2- Freightliner E-One Class A Pumper	2007	Excellent
Engine 3- Freightliner E-One Class A Pumper	2003	Excellent
Tanker-International Eagle	1986	Fair
Squad-GMC	2001	Good
Rescue-Ford E350	1998	Fair
HAZMAT/Utility-F250	1984	Fair to Good
Forestry 1-AM General	1971	Fait to Good
Forestry 2-Jeep	1973	Fair

The Department generally has the capacity to meet the expected growth over the next ten years. However, issues or needs include will include firefighter availability in the day time, tanker drivers, EMT-B for first responders, interior firefighters, tanker replacement, new self contained breathing apparatus and radio system upgrades.

## **Emergency/Rescue/Medical Services**

The town has no rescue department; it depends on PACE for these services. There are First Responders associated with the fire department that reduce the response times. Stephens Memorial Hospital in Norway is the nearest full service medical facility. Specialized medical needs are met by facilities in Lewiston and Portland.

## **Law Enforcement**

Law enforcement is provided by the Oxford County Sheriff's Department and the Maine State Police. Dispatching is provided by the Oxford County Sheriff's Department in Paris and State Police Troop B headquarters in Gray. These services are paid through the County Tax Assessment and other taxes which are paid to the State of Maine. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's Game Wardens provide services to Otisfield. Current law enforcement will be adequate over the 10-year planning period.

## **Waste Disposal**

Otisfield's transfer station is located off Oak Hill Road. For recycling, the town works with Oxford County Regional Recycling. Individuals are responsible for transporting bulky waste to the Casco solid waste site that is owned jointly by Casco and Naples. Otisfield generally participates in AVCOG's



annual household hazardous waste (HHW) disposal day. HHW can be taken to Norway or Lewiston for handling and disposal by a licensed hazardous waste disposal contractor. In 2008, the town achieved a recycling rate of 53.12% that amounted to approximately 580 tons. Recycling is voluntary.

Septage waste is pumped by private companies and transported to one of several area sewage treatment plants.

### ***Otisfield Transfer Station***

## **P Public Works**

The public works department is responsible for summer and winter roads. There is an elected Road Commissioner, three full time employees and two part time workers for winter plowing. The town owns two older dump/plow trucks. Other needed equipment is leased from the Road Commissioner. There is no town garage but one is being considered by the Road Study Committee. The town has a salt/sand shed located off Oak Hill Road, near the transfer station.



***Sand Shed***

## Education

Otisfield belongs to School Administration District (SAD) # 17. The town has an elementary school, K-4 grades, located on Powhatan Road. This facility was built in 1990 and is accompanied by an outdoor playing field, basketball court, and playground. Grades 5-12 attend Oxford Hills Junior High and the Comprehensive High Schools. Since 2005, there has been 16% decline in Otisfield students enrolled in public schools. The decline in elementary enrollment has created this trend. The overall SAD #17 enrollment declined by 5% over the same period.



***Otisfield Community School***

### Otisfield Student Enrollment

Year	Elementary	Secondary	Total
1996	211	70	281
2001	188	93	281
2005	197	103	300
2009	142	111	253

## **C**apital Investment Funds

Capital funds are maintained for improvements to roads and bridges, the municipal building, and the community hall among others.

## **C**ommunications

Electricity is provided by the Central Maine Power transmission system and is adequate to meet demands. Internet service is available as is cellular telephone service, although there are gaps in the latter service and improvements are needed.

# **F**ISCAL CAPACITY

## **F**indings and Conclusions

- ❖ **Otisfield's property tax base is made up largely of residential property and land base.**
- ❖ **The residential shoreline development on Thompson Lake and the town's other ponds are a significant part of the tax base.**
- ❖ **Since the inception of LD 1, Otisfield's budgets have not exceeded the commitment growth limit.**

## **I**ntroduction

A community's fiscal capacity refers to its ability to meet current and future financial needs through public expenditures. Over the next ten years, there will be demands to maintain and/or improve various municipal services, facilities and infrastructure. These demands may include bridge and road improvements, public facilities upgrades, and general governmental operations.

## **R**evenues

The largest source of revenue is from residential property taxes. In 2007, real and personal property was assessed at \$206,807,970. This was comprised of \$112,906,170 in buildings, \$147,901,800 in land and \$2,220,260 in personal property. Approximately 2% of the assessed property value is tax exempt. Between fiscal years 2005 and 2008, the local assessed valuation increased by approximately \$7.6 million or 3%.

Otisfield's property tax base is made up largely of residential property and land base. The Portland Pipeline goes through the town from north to south and is the single most significant tax payer. A major Central Maine Power transmission line also runs through the town almost parallel to the pipeline. Between that transmission line and other CMP lines in town, CMP is also a significant tax payer.

The residential shoreline development on Thompson Lake and the town's other ponds is a significant part of the tax base. Many of these properties are seasonal or owned by retirees who have no significant demand for educational services.

**Valuation and Mil Rate**  
**[Numbers Rounded]**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Assessed Valuation (Local)</b>	<b>State Valuation</b>	<b>Mil Rate</b>
2004	\$132,359,450	\$174,200,000	17.5
2005	\$255,453,220	\$206,450,000	10.25 <sup>1</sup>
2006	\$258,921,920	\$251,950,000	10.50
2007	\$255,453,000	\$230,400,000	5.10 <sup>2</sup>
2008	\$263,028,230	\$269,650,000	10.70

<sup>1</sup> Mil rate decrease reflects re-valuation

<sup>2</sup> Represents a six-month period as the result in change of fiscal year

The tax base over the next ten years will continue to be dependent on residential and second home property and land. Increases in valuation will occur as new year-round and second homes are constructed.

Other major consistent sources of revenues are intergovernmental revenues and excise taxes.

<b>Municipal Revenue</b>					
<b>Fiscal Years</b>					
<b>[Amounts Rounded]</b>					
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2008</b>
Property Taxes	\$2,256,860	\$2,224,360	\$2,555,790	\$1,270,960	\$2,803,850
Excise taxes	\$234,780	\$270,660	\$278,910	\$142,590	\$278,580
Intergovernmental Revenues	\$237,790	\$265,770	\$327,510	\$97,310	\$397,000
Charges for Services	\$52,600	\$28,440	\$23,960	\$25,770	\$46,5000
Other Revenues	\$30,430	\$72,740	\$82,180	\$212,740	\$147,460
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,812,990</b>	<b>\$2885,310</b>	<b>\$3,279,560</b>	<b>\$1,756,440</b>	<b>\$3,6754,200</b>

<sup>1</sup> Represents a six-month period as the result in change of fiscal year

## **Expenditures**

Total municipal expenditures increased by approximately \$1,050,000 or 40% in the five-year period between 2004 and 2008. While this is a considerable increase, the mil rate has remained steady. Over the period, significant expenditures were associated with improvements under the tax increment financing district program and road improvements in 2008.

In 2005, an Act to Increase the State Share of Education Costs, Reduce Property Taxes and Reduce Government Spending at All Levels, better known as LD 1, was enacted. The goal of the law is to lower Maine's total state and local tax burden as compared to those of other states. This goal is to be achieved

by placing limits on the growth of state and local governments. The law provides several formulae that constrain year-to-year increases of municipal property tax levies, county assessments and state General Fund appropriations. Each year a municipal commitment growth limit is calculated based on real personal income growth, population change and increases in real and personal property values attributed to new development and investments. Should the town budget exceed the commitment growth limit, a vote to exceed that limit is required in a town meeting.

Since the inception of LD 1, Otisfield's budgets have not exceeded the commitment growth limit.

<b>Expenditures</b> <b>Fiscal Years 2004 – 2008</b> <b>[Amounts Rounded]</b>					
<b>Category</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2008</b>
General Government	\$233,040	\$245,700	\$256,820	\$153,990	\$319,130
Public Safety	\$91,250	\$129,060	\$114,850	\$73,510	\$152,930
Highways and Bridges	\$419,710	\$321,680	\$432,410	\$227,130	\$656,010
Sanitation	\$117,170	\$130,010	\$121,960	\$60,140	\$127,770
Education	\$1,301,420	\$1,407,130	\$1,591,140	\$854,330	\$1,849,880
Leisure Services	\$18,640	\$21,720	\$26,270	\$6,530	\$23,590
Human Services	\$11,840	\$13,390	\$13,850	\$42,490	\$17,210
County Tax	\$115,060	\$135,510	\$149,020	-	\$170,070
Capital Outlays	\$50,660	\$346,250	\$345,420	\$46,480	\$74,640
Debt Service	\$92,950	\$186,870	\$166,390	\$37,660	\$167,080
Unclassified/Other	\$68,960	\$15,230	\$20,900	\$7,770	\$13,270
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,520,750</b>	<b>\$3,101,180</b>	<b>\$3,239,030</b>	<b>\$1,474,610</b>	<b>\$3,571,570</b>

<sup>1</sup> Represents a six month period as the result in change of fiscal year

## **Capital Projects Fund**

The town maintains a capital project fund and reserve accounts for capital projects. At the end of 2008, there was approximately \$694,000 in the fund.

## **Portland Natural Gas Transmission System Municipal Development TIF District**

A tax increment financing district was established in 2000 which dedicates a portion of captured real estate and personal property revenue over a twenty-year period. The Portland Natural Gas Transmission System Municipal Development TIF District is a 60-foot wide swath of real estate that cuts through the town for the pipeline. The development program includes infrastructure improvements to town-owned land off the Bolsters Mills and Hidden Lakes Roads to generate economic benefits.

## **Municipal Debt**

As of the end of fiscal year 2008, Otisfield had a municipal outstanding long-term debt of \$1,116,000. This amount included a \$1,200,000 bond associated with the TIF payable to the Maine Municipal Bond Bank that will mature in 2018 and a fire truck lease that will expire in 2016.

The amount of debt allowed a municipality is governed by state law; the law limits a town's outstanding debt to 15 percent of the town's last full state valuation. This limit is reduced to 7.5 percent if the debts for schools, sewer, water and special-district purposes are excluded. Based on Otisfield's state valuation, the maximum debt under state law, excluding debt associated with special districts, would be approximately \$20 million. However, such a debt would increase the tax rate significantly. Nevertheless, should the town need to borrow for public improvements, Otisfield has significant borrowing power.

## **Fiscal Capacity**

A community's fiscal capacity is based upon the ability to pay normal municipal operating costs, including education, public works, public safety and finance capital expenditures as needed compared with the ability of the tax base and other revenue sources to support such expenditures. In considering Otisfield's capacity to fund normal municipal services and capital projects two areas are important. First, in recent years, annual increases in valuation have been approximately at the rate of inflation. A rate of the increase in valuation greater than the rate of inflation would allow increased expenditures to be implemented without a mil rate increase. The mil rate has remained steady over the past four years. Secondly, Otisfield does have significant borrowing power based on the maximums established in state law. Future borrowing for capital expenditures should be based on projected valuation increases and their impacts upon taxpayers.

# **E**xisting Land Use

## **F**indings and Conclusions

- ❖ **There are three locations that retain some typical small town village characteristics.**
- ❖ **Scattered residential development will be the most common residential land use type for the planning period because of current land use regulations and how and why land is sold.**
- ❖ **The minimum amount of land to accommodate anticipated residential growth between 2011 and 2020 is up to 600 acres.**

## **I**ntroduction

A major element of a comprehensive plan is the analysis of the use of land and existing development patterns. Through this analysis, insights into community functions, past and current priorities and future directions are possible. Current land use patterns and expected future development trends are cornerstones in the development of recommendations and actions that will shape future land utilization characteristics.

Otisfield, located in west central Oxford County, has a land area of some 28,700 acres. In 2000, the year-round population was 1,560; however, the estimated 2008 population by the State Planning Office was 1,690. There is a significant increase in seasonal population with 400 second homes and commercial campground sites as well as Camp Acadia and Seeds of Peace. Seasonal population can grow by more than 2,000 above that of the year-round population.

## **W**oodland Land Use

Trees grow on most of the land in Otisfield. Large blocks of commercial or managed forest lands cover most of the landscape west of Route 121 to the Bolsters Mill Road north to Bolsters Mill. The amount of forest land has increased in recent history as some once open fields have reverted to woods. Perhaps the greatest changes in forest land have been their ownership characteristics and creation of smaller woodlots.

## **Field/Agricultural Land Use**

There are open fields in Otisfield located mostly in the northeast portion of town. These lands are used primarily for hay. Fields constitute less than 4% of the land in Otisfield.

## **Scattered Residential/Subdivision Land Use**

The most prevalent type of year-round residential land use pattern is what is termed as “scattered.” This means those new homes are located adjacent to many town roads. Areas that have this land use pattern include the Gore Road, Hidden Lake Road to Moose Pond Road, Bell Hill Road to Pond View Drive, southern end of Ahonen Road, Bell Hill Road to South Tamworth Road, Route 121/Sylvester Ridge Road, Route 121/Camp Nona Road, northern end of Scribner Hills Road and southern end of Scribner Hills Road/Forrest Edwards Road/North Camp Road. Most recent new residential growth has been of the scattered type verses in planned subdivisions. From 2006 to 2009, there were 100 permits issued for new homes. Reliable information is not available for the 2000 to 2005 period, but it has been estimated that 150 permits were issued over those six years.

Directed by current land use regulations and why land is sold, scattered residential development will be most common residential land use type during planning period.

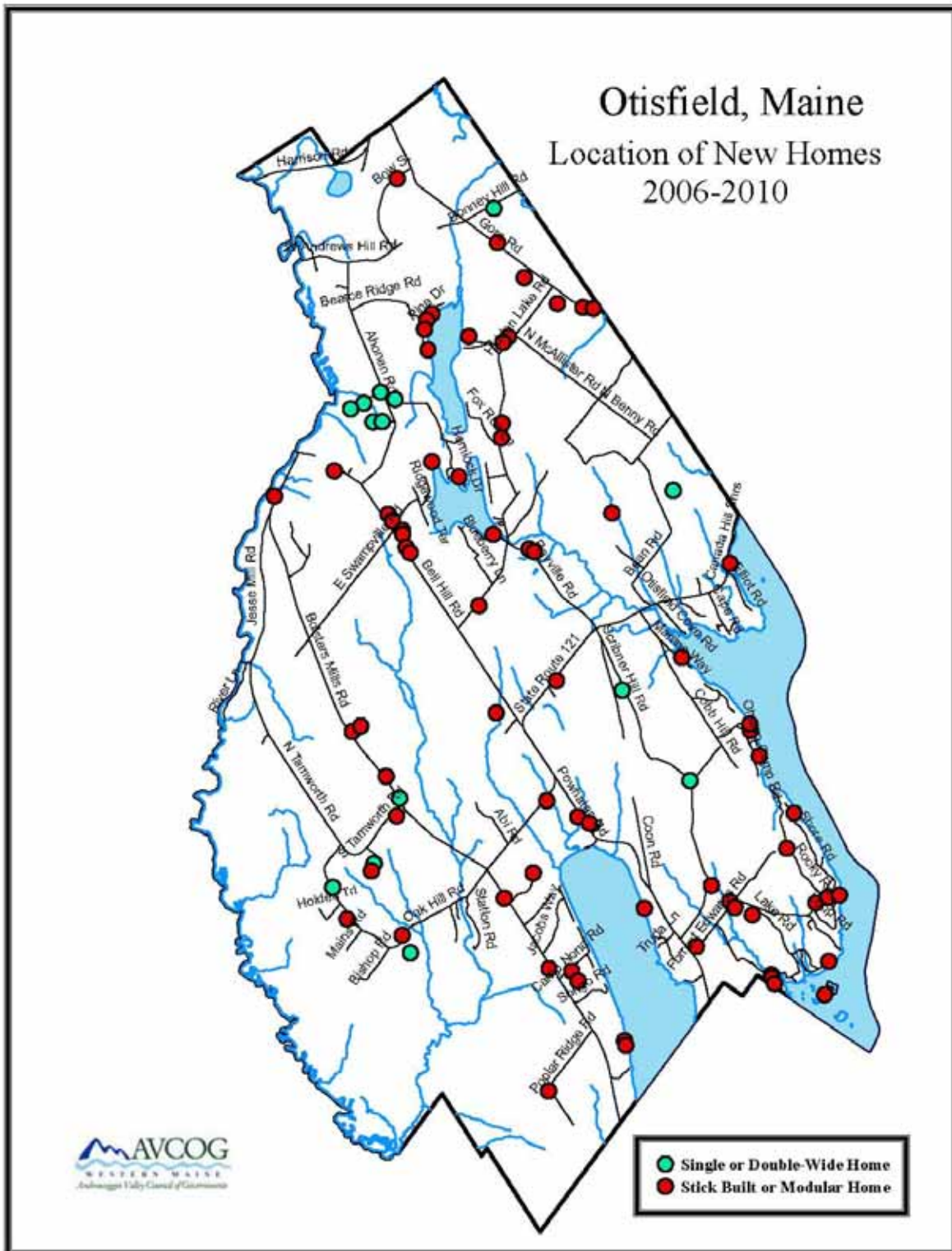
## **Shoreline Residential Land Use**

With some 400 second/seasonal homes, shoreline residential land use is an important pattern in Otisfield. The shores of Thompson Lake have long had many seasonal homes. Today, both seasonal and year-round homes are found there. The western shore of Moose Pond shows shoreline residential land use as does the west and east shores of Saturday Pond. Pleasant Lake, partly in Otisfield and partly in Casco, has such development patterns on its northern end.

The days of constructing "summer camps" have ended with buildings now being constructed to allow habitation on a year-round basis. Over the next ten years, new shoreland residential development will slow because of less available land and the increasing costs to afford living on the "lake."

## **Village Character Land Use**

While Otisfield in its early years had distinct villages that is not the case today. There are, however, three locations that retain some typical small town village characteristics such as public buildings, stores and/or homes close to each other. These include Bolsters Mill and the area across the Crooked River in Harrison, Spurrs Corner and East Otisfield/Wight Corners.



## **C**ommercial Land Use

Otisfield does not have any concentrated commercial land use areas. Other than two small convenience stores and a campground, commercial activities are small, owner-operated and scattered around town.

## **L**and Use Regulation

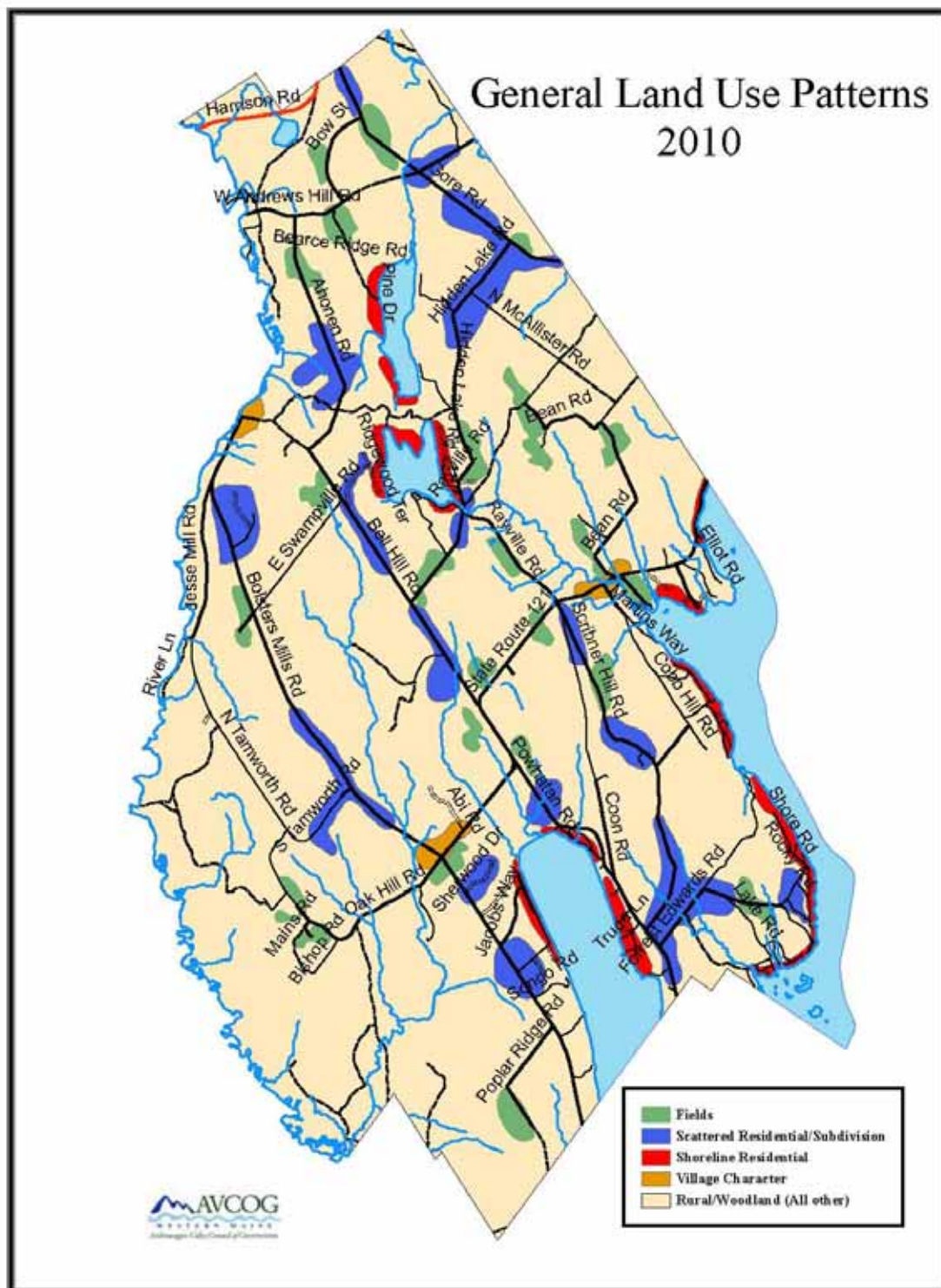
Otisfield residents have enacted a Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, Floodplain Management Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Site Plan Review Ordinance and Building Ordinance. Both the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and Floodplain Management Ordinance complied with the minimum requirements when adopted. The Site Plan Review Ordinance establishes standards for planning board review and approval of non-residential development proposals. There are a series of performance standards that must be met for development proposals to be approved. The Subdivision Ordinance also contains performance standards for approval of subdivisions and for roads to be constructed as part of the subdivision. The Building Ordinance establishes minimum dimensional requirements of 87,120 square feet for residential lots. In addition, if more than one dwelling unit is contained in a structure, 87,120 square feet is required for each dwelling unit.

There is no town-wide zoning. Mobile home parks would be allowed in all areas except shoreland areas provided they met the standards of the Subdivision Ordinance. There are no specific performance standards for mobile home parks in the subdivision Ordinance.

To date, the current land use ordinances have worked well in managing development in an environmental sense. The current ordinances are not directing development to any desired locations. The location of new growth is primarily based on the desires of individual land owners to sell or develop their land.

## **L**and Needed for Future Growth

It is anticipated that most new growth in the 2011-2020 period will be residential. That residential growth will be both year-round and second homes. The demand for year-round homes will be greater than for second homes. The amount of land to accommodate this growth will depend on the nature of the land sold for home development. Individual large lot development will require more land than more compact planned development. The minimum amount of land to accommodate anticipated residential growth is up to 600 acres between 2011 and 2020.



***05.25.11-JAM***