

13. Recreation

Regional Overview

Within a relatively short drive, Brewer residents have a multitude of choices for recreation and enjoyment of cultural events throughout the seasons. Proximity to both outdoor and cultural activities is frequently stated as a primary determinant in a Maine location by residents and chief executive officers alike. Brewer can use its location as an asset.

People who enjoy the outdoors can walk, boat, canoe, hike, bike, hunt, fish, ice fish, ice boat, sightsee, rock climb, golf, swim, camp, ski, slide, skate, observe nature, snowmobile, and enjoy many more activities in Maine's premier settings. For example, major ski facilities such as Sugarloaf are approximately two hours away; Acadia National Park, only an hour and a half away, offers hikers, bikers, campers, boaters, and sightseers a variety of coastal activities; and closer to home, the Kenduskeag Stream and the Penobscot River are both available for boating, kayaking, fishing, white water rafting, and other water sports. Several swimming areas, public and private, are also available, within one hour of Brewer. These include Swan Lake State Park in Swanville and Jenkins Beach on Green Lake in Ellsworth. The Bangor Y is just across the river in Bangor. Other resources include the Fields Pond Audubon Center and the Curran Homestead.

Brewer residents can also attend plays, lectures, exhibits, and concerts nearby at the University of Maine at Orono, at the new Cross Insurance Center in Bangor, and at the Performing Arts Center in the new Brewer Community School.

Brewer Parks and Recreation Department

The Brewer Parks and Recreation Department organizes, promotes and supervises a comprehensive recreational, cultural and social program for the citizens of Brewer. The Department serves the community with eight full time staff and 60 part time, seasonal employees. The parks and cemeteries staff provides maintenance and supervision of all 19 parks and athletic facilities, three cemeteries, and mowing and trimming of school, city hall and municipal properties.

The recreation division staff supervises over 93 programs that include the municipal swimming pool, after school activities, adult and youth sport leagues, the after-school program, Zumba, snowboard and ski lessons, youth basketball leagues, Brewer Hometown Band concerts, adult softball and volleyball, youth soccer, two summer day camp programs, swim lessons, numerous summer individual activities, and seasonal special events.

Parks and Playgrounds

The City of Brewer has a wide variety of park and recreation facilities available to its citizens:

Brewer Auditorium Complex. The Brewer Auditorium Complex is the focal point of community recreation activity. It consists of the community center, Doyle Field, Community Playground, and Municipal Swimming Pool. Doyle Field is a 4-acre facility that provides a lighted football and softball field. Stadium seating accommodates 1,500 for athletic events and the site is also used extensively for

sliding, skating and cross-country skiing during the winter months and for special events and day camp activities during the warmer months. The Community Playground, located adjacent to the auditorium, is accessible to those with disabilities and can accommodate up to 100 youngsters at a time. The Brewer Municipal Swimming Pool is one of the largest outdoor pools in Eastern Maine and is open for 10 weeks during the summer season.

Brewer Riverwalk and Penobscot Landing Children's Garden. Located on the waterfront behind Dead River Oil, this half-acre park features themed plantings, walking paths, a waterfall and an area for events such as weddings or performances. The planned waterfront trail will run adjacent to the site.

Boat Launch. Located on North Main Street, this site serves as access to the Penobscot River. Picnic tables and benches are also on the site.

Caldwell Ice Rink. This lighted outdoor ice rink is located adjacent to Penobscot Ice Arena at the end of Acme Road.

Capri Street Park. This facility has a full size soccer field in addition to play structures.

Dougherty Recreational Complex. The former Washington Street School complex has been renamed and is currently in the process of being renovated into a multi-use recreational facility that will feature two improved little league fields, multipurpose athletic field, 1/3 mile paved walking path, new playground, paved parking lot, and other amenities. The scheduled date for completion is the spring of 2015. Funding for this project has been made possible by Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems, City of Brewer, and a matching grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Eastern Park. Located on South Main Street, this 1.5-acre park has two playground sites, picnic tables, benches, and a scenic view of the Penobscot River.

Fisherman's Park/Scenic Turnouts. Located along South Main Street overlooking the Penobscot River, these areas provide picnic tables, benches, and views of the river.

Fling Street Park. This quarter-acre park is located on Fling Street and has been recently renovated to include playground equipment.

Indian Trail Park. This 4-acre park, located in North Brewer, provides picnic tables, benches, views of the Penobscot River, and a sliding hill. A walking trail that overlooks the Penobscot runs along the park and beyond.

Maple Street Park. This 6-acre park, once the site of a junkyard, has been transformed into a neighborhood park. Located adjacent to Maple Street in South Brewer, the complex features a 1/3 mile paved walking path, baseball field, soccer field, picnic tables and benches.

School Street Park. This small pocket park, located off South Main Street next to the library, contains playground equipment for tots along with a picnic table and shade trees.

Sherwood Forest. Located off Friar Tuck Lane, this 10-acre wooded park has a newly constructed loop trail for walking. The Brewer Land Trust, as well as other organizations, have worked hard to create the system of trails.

Sunset Park. This 2-acre park, located on Parkway South, contains two completely fenced-in basketball courts and a park area where the Brewer Hometown Band performs one of its many summer concerts.

Tennis Courts. There are four outdoor, lighted tennis courts located at Brewer High School.

Veteran's Park. Completed in 1998, this park is located next to the Penobscot Bridge and provides vistas of the river. It has a sheltered picnic table and benches.

Analysis

- 1. Adequacy of recreational facilities and programs to accommodate projected growth or changes in age groups.** In general, most recreational facilities and programs appear to be adequate for the next 10 years. However, the Doyle Field surface needs to be upgraded (see also #2, below).
- 2. The need for certain types of services or facilities to be upgraded or enlarged.** The outdoor municipal swimming pool needs to be replaced.
- 3. The extent to which important tracts of open space commonly used for recreation are publicly-owned or otherwise permanently conserved.** Most are publicly owned. The inactive portion of the railroad line is used by the public for walking and snowmobiling. It would be desirable to acquire an easement to improve as a trail for more to use.
- 4. Community mechanisms such as an open space fund or partnership with a land trust, to acquire important open spaces and access sites, either outright or through conservation easements.** The Brewer Land Trust both owns and holds conservation easements within the City and regionally.
- 5. Public access to the community's significant water bodies.** There is a public boat landing off North Main Street into the Penobscot River and several other locations for river visibility and walking. The City has been approached about improving a site for hand-held boat access by the Penobscot Riverkeepers.
- 6. Maintenance of recreational trails and use conflicts on these trails.** Brewer has a limited number of trails but anticipates additional trails being added to the system. The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for maintaining city trails. There do not appear to be any conflicts between different users of the trails.
- 7. Restriction of access to private lands. This does not appear to be a problem.** By way of example, the ITS snowmobile trail runs through Brewer with no known issues.

- 8. Extent of partnering with neighboring communities.** The Brewer Parks and Recreation programs are offered to non-Brewer residents. The Brewer Land Trust and the Bangor Land Trust work together on land holdings and events.
- 9. Adequacy of non-recreational facilities.** Cemetery expansion will need to be addressed within ten years. The City owns more land at the Woodlands Cemetery but the land needs to be prepared for future burials.
- 10. Extent to which investments in facility improvement are directed to growth areas.** The Washington Street athletic complex (former school site undergoing improvements) is located on the north side of town. This gives a recreation site on the north side where more recent large subdivisions are located.