

Summary

A Conservation Plan for Bremen



August 2008

How do you envision Bremen years from now? Will it be a town characterized by forests and scenic views as it is today? Will the ponds be clean and fit for swimming, fishing and boating? Will there still be a working waterfront? Or will the forests and fields have given way to house lots, wildlife habitat disappeared, and lobster boats replaced by yachts?

Undoubtedly most Bremen residents prefer the first scenario. Many people choose to live in Bremen for its scenic beauty and rural way of life. We often assume that beauty and way of life will exist forever. That is a false assumption. Population growth is accelerating along Mid-Coast Maine, accompanied by increased development and sprawl. We need to make sound choices now if we want to conserve lands and open space in Bremen for tomorrow. To help make those choices, the Bremen Conservation Commission has prepared a *Conservation Plan for Bremen*.

Before starting work on the Plan, the Commission invited Bremen residents to a public forum to talk about favorite places in Bremen and to share their ideas for what land should be conserved. In addition, the Commission consulted with conservation organizations such as the Medomak Valley Land Trust, the Pemaquid Watershed Association, the Maine Association of Conservation Commissions, the Maine Audubon Society, the Maine Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, many other conservation agencies and organizations, and several town committees. The Commission also mapped conservation easements, town-owned lands and rights-of-way, land in Tree Growth and Open Space, areas of high wildlife value, and wetlands.

In November 2007, the Commission invited residents to another public forum, this time to see and comment on a draft plan, including possible strategies for conserving open space lands in Bremen. Information and opinions were used to prepare the final plan, organized by four primary goals: Maintain Rural Character, Protect Water Resources, Preserve Wildlife Habitat, and Provide Recreational Opportunities. This is a *summary* of the *Conservation Plan for Bremen*.

Maintain *Rural Character*

The Bremen Comprehensive Plan has as its primary goal “Preserve Bremen’s Rural, Sparsely Settled Character...” But what exactly is “Rural Character?” For Bremen, “rural character” is equally defined by the town’s landscape and by its inhabitants.

What gives the Bremen landscape its rural character are the large unbroken tracts of forest land, fields, scenic views of ponds and tidal harbors, and homes clustered in small villages or scattered along town roads and shores.

Just as important to the town’s rural character are its inhabitants. Throughout its history, Bremen residents have farmed the land, fished the waters, and logged the forests. Without clambers digging the mud flats at low tide, lobstermen with traps piled high beside their homes, farmers grazing livestock and tending gardens, and enterprising residents offering goods from roadside stands, Bremen would soon lose its rural character and become just another bedroom community.

Objectives:

- Maintain the predominately forested landscape
- Retain open fields for scenic views, wildlife habitat, and agriculture
- Maintain waterfront access for commercial fisherman and clambers
- Keep Bremen an inviting place for fishermen, clambers, farmers, and craftspeople.



defining rural character

Protect Water Resources

For a town with a relatively small land area, Bremen is fortunate to have diverse fresh and coastal water resources including ponds, streams, wetlands, coves, estuaries, mud flats and deep water frontage. Water resource conservation is critical in any community, and is especially so in Bremen. Without a municipal water supply, clean and safe groundwater is a basic necessary for drinking and other household needs.

Many residents of Bremen are dependent on water-based economic activity such as lobstering, clamming and marine services. Our lakes, ponds, wetlands and coastal waters provide habitat for wildlife and recreational opportunities for all to enjoy. Waterfront property is highly desirable for homes, but the economic value of waterfront property depends on the ecological well being of the water resources.

Bremen residents have expressed a desire to protect our water resources to ensure their availability and viability in the future.

Objectives:

- Maintain forest cover around all water bodies and critical upland watershed areas
- Conserve ground water supplies
- Protect and potentially expand access for working waterfront and recreation
- Maintain high water quality by preventing pollution
- Practice stewardship

Water Quality Summary

Pond	Water Quality	Summer Oxygen Loss	Potential Internal Phosphorus Recycling	Algal Bloom Potential
Biscay	Average	Moderate	Moderate	Low
McCurdy	Above Average	Moderate/High	Moderate	Low/Moderate
Pemaquid	Average	Moderate/High	High	Moderate
Webber	Above Average	Moderate/High	Moderate	Low/Moderate

water quality

Preserve *Wildlife Habitat*

The most important element of preserving wildlife habitat is the maintenance of an environment suitable for sustaining a population of various forms of wildlife.

A basic need for all forms of wildlife is sufficient space to hunt for food and to find shelter. Different species require different amounts of land to support their existence. Raccoons, for example, require very little undeveloped space, but moose generally do not exist in areas of much less than 500 undeveloped acres. That does not necessarily mean a single parcel of 500 acres, but possibly a group of contiguous properties that totals 500 acres.

To protect existing habitat, we must work together to identify and protect properties that may remain undeveloped and can support wildlife. At the same time, we can provide opportunity for planned development in other areas of town.

All the species listed in the Tier 1 column of the Habitat Block Size Requirement chart either are in Bremen now or, in the case of the black bear, have been here within the last five years. Notice, that if we do not protect some of our undeveloped land, many of those species in tiers 1 through 4 will begin to disappear.

Some species, such as the bald eagle and the musk turtle, are already on the threatened and endangered species list. They need all the protection we can provide.

Objectives:

- Preserve existing wildlife habitat in Bremen
- Discuss habitat preservation with people in contiguous towns



**Habitat Block Size Requirements
for Maine Wildlife**

Tier 5 1-19 Acres	Tier 4 20-99 Acres	Tier3 100-499 Acres	Tier2 500-2000 Acres	Tier 1 Undeveloped
Raccoon	Raccoon Hare	Raccoon Hare	Raccoon Hare	Raccoon Hare Coyote
Rodent	Rodent Porcupine Beaver Squirrel Weasel	Rodent Porcupine Beaver Squirrel Weasel	Rodent Porcupine Beaver Squirrel Weasel	Rodent Porcupine Bobcat Beaver Black Bear Squirrel Weasel Fisher
Muskrat	Woodchuck Deer Muskrat	Woodchuck Deer Muskrat Moose	Woodchuck Deer Muskrat Moose	Woodchuck Deer Muskrat Moose
Red Fox Songbirds	Red Fox Songbirds	Red Fox Songbirds Red Hawk	Red Fox Songbirds Hawk Bald Eagle	Red Fox Songbirds Hawk Bald Eagle
Skunk	Skunk	Skunk Kestrel Owl	Skunk Kestrel Owl Raven	Skunk Kestrel Red-Tail Hawk Owl Raven
Reptiles Amphibians	Reptiles Amphibians	Osprey Turkey Reptiles Amphibians Wood Frog	Osprey Turkey Reptiles Amphibians Wood Frog	Osprey Turkey Reptiles Amphibians Wood Frog



wildlife diversity

Provide Recreational Opportunities



Our Comprehensive Plan states that Bremen *is rich in recreational resources*. The Town has all the geographic features that make outdoor recreation possible and enjoyable for young and old alike. Traditional hunting and fishing form the backbone of our recreational heritage and have been available to generations of Bremen residents. Today we see people enjoying a broad range of activities that include hiking, bicycling, kayaking, sailing, birdwatching, bow hunting, horseback riding, snowshoeing, ice-fishing, canoeing, and swimming.



Two of the biggest challenges the Town of Bremen will face in the years to come are the conservation of open space and the maintenance and acquisition of water access. If large blocks of our forested areas are eroded by development, outdoor recreation will diminish. When open space is conserved, outdoor recreational activities are enhanced. Water-related recreation can exist only if people have access to the water. Currently, there is limited public access to Bremen's freshwater ponds. Saltwater access is also limited. Without access to both salt and fresh water activities such as swimming, non-motorized boating, and fishing will be enjoyed only by waterfront property owners.



The conservation commission is already at work with the Medomak Valley Land Trust planning for the recently donated 165-acre Karl Berger Preserve on Bremen Long Island. Our efforts will ensure additional public access points, preserve traditional hunting grounds and conserve land for a multitude of recreational activities.

Given the rising popularity of Lincoln County as a place to live, demand by residents and non-residents for outdoor recreation in Bremen will increase. As it does, conservation planning will be critical in protecting land and water resources while enhancing recreational opportunities for the people of Bremen.

Objectives:

- Inventory recreational activities in Bremen
- Encourage traditional recreation



outdoor recreation

Strategies

Each of the four main goals of the *Conservation Plan for Bremen* has specific objectives. Some objectives for one goal overlap with those of others. The overall strategies proposed by the Conservation Commission would each achieve more than one objective. For example, the first strategy, “Identify and Protect Large Undeveloped Blocks,” pertains to all Conservation Goals. Large blocks of undeveloped land are vital to maintaining wildlife habitat. If all the town’s land becomes fragmented, many species of wildlife, such as moose and deer will disappear from Bremen. Blocks of undeveloped land are also critical to protection of water resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to maintain the town’s rural character.

1. Identify and Protect Large Undeveloped Blocks

- Identify unfragmented blocks of land, including multiple connected parcels, of at least 125 acres, and determine which are most critical to future open space needs of the town
- Protect critical parcels through a combination of measures such as easements, donations, and acquisitions and with the local land trusts to provide information for landowners of applicable properties
- Work with neighboring towns to protect even larger blocks of land

2. Identify and Protect Designated High Value Wildlife Areas

- Locate habitat areas designated as high value on the Beginning with Habitat Map No.2
- Propose plans to protect the high-value areas

3. Protect Water Sources

- Maintain forested watersheds to absorb precipitation, renew ground water aquifers, and prevent nonpoint source pollution
- Reduce amount of erosion from gravel roads and driveways and other impervious surfaces in critical watershed areas
- Encourage maintenance and installation of vegetated shoreline buffers
- Protect lakes from invasive plants
- Protect water from contamination
- Encourage minimal residential use of fertilizers and chemicals on lawns
- Consider need for future town water supply

4. Provide Recreational Opportunities

- Identify and inventory existing high-value recreational areas
- Improve fresh and saltwater access for recreational purposes
- Consider ways to utilize existing town-owned properties for low-impact, non-motorized recreation
- Encourage landowners to keep open traditional hunting areas with an emphasis on firearms safety
- Work directly with local land trusts, neighboring towns, conservation minded organizations and individuals
- Establish a Recreation Sub-committee of the Bremen Conservation Commission

5. Encourage Traditional Rural Occupations

- Provide information that will assist current and potential farmers
- Provide information to assist Working Waterfront property owners
- Ensure residents can continue to make agricultural use of their land, including timber harvesting, crop growing and livestock grazing; that fishermen can store boats, traps and other gear beside their homes; and farmers, artists, craftspeople and other residents can provide services or sell products from their homes or yards

6. Manage Town Conservation Account

- Establish criteria for use of town Conservation Account to acquire land, easements, and rights-of-way to maintain open space for Bremen's future
- Seek sources of additional funding for Conservation Account, such as matching grants and donations

7. Promote Education & Participation

- Provide conservation-minded educational programs to encourage conservation awareness
- Encourage year-round and seasonal residents to participate in conservation planning
- Share ideas to satisfy the stated strategies listed above



About the Bremen Conservation Commission

In 2006 the Town of Bremen established a five-member Conservation Commission for the purpose of conserving land and open space in Bremen. One of the first Commission's first acts was to define its mission, as follows:

The mission of the Bremen Conservation Commission is to work with town citizens, government agencies and natural resource organizations to conserve undeveloped land in Bremen that will maintain the rural character of the town, protect its water resources, preserve wildlife habitat and provide recreational opportunities.

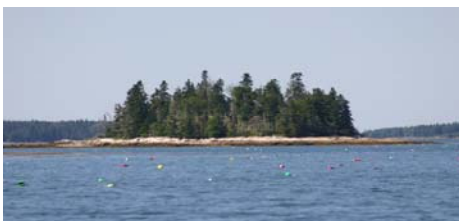
The Commission decided the first step in carrying out its mission was to develop a Conservation Plan for Bremen. To do this, the Commission:

- Held two forums to learn public opinions on conserving lands in Bremen.
- Sponsored three public informational presentations: "Beginning with Habitat," Alewives and other Anadromous Fish," and "Conservation Easements."
- Sought information and advice from Medomak Valley Land Trust, Pemaquid Watershed Association, Damariscotta River Association, Maine Audubon Society, Maine Association of Conservation Commissions, Friends of Mid-Coast Maine, and other organizations.
- Completed a list of Conservation Easements in Bremen and prepared a town map portraying easements, town-owned lands and rights of way, tree growth and open space lands, essential wildlife habitat areas, wetlands, special spots selected by the public, developed sites, and other features.
- Worked with Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association GIS Support Center to prepare large computerized versions of maps depicting conservation features.
- Is working with Medomak Valley Land Trust's Stewardship Committee on plans to manage the 165-acre Karl F. Berger Preserve on Bremen Long Island.
- Participates in the annual Medomak River Festival.
- Proposed articles for Town Meeting to establish and fund a town conservation account.
- Joined the Maine Association of Conservation Commissions.

Getting Involved

We hope this summary has piqued your interest in the Conservation Plan for Bremen. The full plan may be viewed at the Town Office and Bremen Library. If you have any questions, please contact the Conservation Commission by email at bcc@tidewater.net or attend one of our meetings. Currently we meet every 4th Thursday of each month at 7 p.m in the Bremen Town Center. *Everyone is welcome!*

The Town of Bremen has established a Conservation Account for the purpose of acquiring land, easements and rights-of-way to maintain open space for Bremen's future. If you are interested in contributing to this account, you may send donations to:



Conservation Account -Town of Bremen
P.O. Box 171
Bremen, ME 04551

"The purpose of conservation: The greatest good for the greatest number in the long run. "
-Gifford Pinchot, first Director of the U.S. Forest Service