

## Recreation

### Town Recreation Facilities

The Town of New Gloucester maintains two dedicated outdoor recreation facilities: Rowe Station Park and the New Gloucester Fairgrounds. Rowe Station Park has two tennis courts, a basketball court, and two baseball diamonds. The baseball outfields can be used as a general purpose athletic field. The New Gloucester Fairgrounds has a half mile gravel track, a pavilion, a playground, a hand carry boat launch, and maintained trails. The infield of the track is over 11 acres of land and is used as a general purpose athletic space currently supporting three separate playing fields. The potential exists to have more playing fields and an improved playing surface on this infield. An unimproved public park called Haskell Park is located along Stevens Brook within the Lower Gloucester cemetery.

The town also has two areas of land with potential for low impact recreational use such as trails. The first is known as the town forest and is approximately 64 acres of wooded land along Interstate 95 near the Auburn border. The second is approximately 130 acres in the eastern part of town closest to Woodman Road. Unfortunately, both of these properties are land locked and do not have direct access.

The town has a fulltime recreation director who oversees the recreation programming and use of town facilities. The Community Building at the municipal complex houses the Parks and Recreation Department and hosts indoor programming year-round. Indoor programming is limited by the space available in the community building. The town works with local non-profits and neighboring towns to offer recreational and educational programming for all ages from youth athletics to senior bus trips.



New Gloucester Fairgrounds Entrance

*Source: Town Files*

### Other Athletic Facilities

There are a number of public and private athletic fields in New Gloucester which are available for different levels of public use. The MSAD 15 school district operates the Memorial and Dunn schools. Both schools have playgrounds, general purpose athletic fields with baseball diamonds, and indoor gymnasiums.

The non-profit Gray-New Gloucester Little League maintains and operates two baseball fields in New Gloucester. One is off Intervale Road on land owned by a private individual. GNGLL is working with the Royal River Conservation Trust to protect this property and continue the use of the athletic field. The other field is on land owned by GNGLL off of Penny Road. This land is open space of a cluster subdivision and restricted by approval and deeds such that it can only be used for recreation. The GNGLL initially received approval for an additional three fields in this location which have not been built at this time.

Pineland Farms maintains three tennis courts, a bocce court, and two ice skating ponds, which are all open to the public free of charge. They additionally operate two 18-hole disc golf courses which are open to the public for a fee. They also maintain a trail network that extends into the neighboring towns of Gray and North Yarmouth. This network includes over 18 miles of trails on their properties, which are free to the public for non-winter hiking. Mountain biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing are also allowed on the trails for a fee. There is also a YMCA located on the Pineland Campus with a variety of recreational facilities available to members.

### **Publicly Accessible Recreation Land**

There are significant amounts of land open to the public in New Gloucester owned by the state, land trusts, and private landowners. Traditional passive recreational use of land for off trail hiking, hunting, and fishing is a central part of New Gloucester's relationship with its land. Hunting and fishing are allowed on many of the properties identified as open to public use on the Recreation Resources map, but all users should confirm the rules and restrictions with the owner of any particular property.

Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife owns two properties in New Gloucester that are open to public access. Chandler Mill Pond is a 47acre pond managed by MDIFW since 2016. The property has a hand carry boat launch, wheelchair accessible trail from the parking area to the pond, and hiking trails around the lake. MDIFW also owns a large property off of Woodman Road know as Thurston Meadow. There are no formal improvements to this land but it is open to the public for hunting and bird watching.

There are three land trusts with large holdings in New Gloucester: the Royal River Conservation Trust, the Maine Woodland Owners, and the New England Forestry Foundation. RRCT



Cross-country Skiing at Pineland *Photo Courtesy of Susi Delaney*

encourages public use of their lands and has made improvements including trails and boat launches. They also allow hunting on their lands. Their properties are organized into four main preserves:

- The Pisgah Hill Preserve: Located in the southern corner of town, this preserve includes maintained walking trails.
- The Intervale Preserve: Spread along the Intervale this preserve includes a maintained walking trail and two hand carry boat launches accessing the Royal River.
- The Big Falls Preserve: Located at the end of Woodman Road on the border with Auburn, this preserve includes a maintained walking trail which connects with publicly accessible trails on neighboring, privately owned land.
- The Flowing North Preserve: On the Royal River near the Upper Village, there are no formal trails on this property but the public is welcome to explore.

The Maine Woodland Owners is in the process of taking ownership of over 2,000 acres of forested land in New Gloucester. They do not currently have plans for formal improvements to their properties but allow public access to their properties for hiking and hunting. The New England Forestry Foundation holds a conservation easement on the land owned by The United Society of Shakers. This easement explicitly allows for public access to the land.

The Bradbury-Pineland Corridor, an important regional trail network briefly touches New Gloucester's southern corner. These trails can be accessed by tie-ins to the Pineland trail network and two parking areas are located just outside of the town. The network links state-owned land in Gray to Bradbury Mountain State Park via off road trails and links to a number of other small preserves and trails in the area.

New Gloucester is home to the Royal River Riders, an active and long standing snowmobile club. The club maintains and grooms



Sabbathday Lake at Outlet Beach *Photo Courtesy of Ellen Frankel*

23 miles of trails in New Gloucester connecting to additional trail networks in Auburn, Gray, and Poland. Their trails run primarily over privately owned land and the club has long been excellent stewards working closely with the community and land owners to maintain connectivity across the town.

## **Water Recreation**

New Gloucester has significant water recreational opportunities in the Royal River, Chandler Mill Pond, and Sabbathday Lake. As outlined above, free, public, hand carry boat launches are available on the Royal River on land owned by the town and land owned by RRCT. The state of Maine has recently built a free, public, hand carry boat launch on Chandler Mill Pond. The Royal River is identified as a water trail by the RRCT which monitors conditions. While portions of the upper river in New Gloucester are not navigable large stretches make for good small craft boating. The water trail continues the length of the river to Casco Bay.

Access to Sabbathday Lake is more constrained. The only public access to the lake is through the privately run Outlet Beach which is open to the public for a small fee. Outlet Beach has a beach, swimming area, and trailered boat launch. This site allows for hand carry and trailered boat access to the lake for the public and is how many shorefront property owners get their boats into and out of the lake. As with many Maine lakes, privately owned shorefront has become more restrictive in recent years, removing some informal but traditional access points to the lake.

There are multiple stocked fishing locations in New Gloucester. Sabbathday Lake, Chandler Mill Pond, and the Stevens Brook pond are stocked by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The Stevens Brook Pond is designated a Special Opportunity Water by MDIFW and fishing is limited to



those under 16 years of age or who hold an eligible complimentary fishing license. It is one of four Special Opportunity Waters in Cumberland County. Pineland Farms also stocks its pond on Route 231 and allows the public to fish there. While not stocked, Brandy Brook is identified by MDIFW as a brook trout fishery.

### **Cooperation with Neighboring Towns**

The town's recreation department works closely with the town of Gray's recreation department in ways that complement the strengths of the other municipality. The two towns have been collaborating to streamline the sports and events programming in the Gray/New Gloucester area since Fall 2019. In Fall 2019, the Gray and New Gloucester Recreation Departments offered their first collaborative program, Fall Youth Soccer. This collaboration was expanded to include Adult Softball League, Youth Track and Field, Youth Flag Football, Field Hockey, and Youth Lacrosse in the spring of 2020. COVID-19 cancelled all of the programming that was scheduled for spring 2020, however Track and Field, Field Hockey, and Flag Football programs all operated successfully and in collaboration in the fall 2020.

The Departments also worked together to offer a "Trunk or Treat" event at the New Gloucester Fairgrounds for families on Halloween. Staging a joint event was crucial to getting enough full time employees to effectively manage and staff the event under the particularly challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The two towns have also worked with the Town of Windham to better provide services and programs targeted to seniors. The three towns have worked together to provide a lunch and learn program and a bus trip to the Boston Flower Show.

# New Gloucester Recreation Resources

## Fairgrounds

- Playground
- Multi-purpose Field
- Boat Launch

## Rowe Station

- Baseball Field
- Multi-purpose Field
- Tennis Court

## Memorial School


- Playground
- Baseball Field
- Gym


## Dunn School

- Playground
- Baseball Field
- Multi-purpose Field
- Gym

## Pineland

- Tennis Court
- Disc Golf
- Bocce Court
- Ice Skating Pond
- Basketball Court
- Cross Country Skiing Trails
- Mountain Bike Trails
- YMCA

 Properties Open to Public Access

 Properties with Formal Trails

 Boat Launch

 GNGLL Baseball Field

