

Kittery's Natural Resources, Open Space & Recreation Resources

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MANY DISTINCTIVE NATURAL RESOURCES

- Geology, topography and soils in Kittery reflect its geographic location along the Atlantic coast. Bedrock closely underlies much of the town, interspersed with pockets of marine soils and glacial outwash.
- Five watersheds cover most of Kittery, with the largest extending along the Piscataqua River and Spruce Creek. Many smaller tributaries feed these waterways.
- The town has relatively few fresh water resources, and much of the public drinking water is supplied by wells.
- Kittery contains very little farmland and supports just three active farms.
- Kittery supports three “natural areas,” as defined by the Maine Natural Areas Program, including salt-hay salt marsh, white oak-red oak forest, and dune grassland.
- Two “habitat focus areas,” defined by Beginning with Habitat, are located in Kittery. These areas, located in the Brave Boat Harbor-Gerrish Island area and York River Headwaters area, support rare plants, animals and their habitats.
- The town’s location at the confluence of the Piscataqua River with the Atlantic Ocean, combined with the many historic buildings and landscape features, give Kittery tremendous scenic quality.

SIGNIFICANT OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

- Of Kittery’s 12,000 acres and 30 miles of coastline, approximately 14% of the acreage and 10% of the coastline have been protected through a variety of conservation methods.
- While the State of Maine and Town of Kittery own some of this protected land, the majority has been conserved through the efforts of the Kittery Land Trust (840 acres) and Maine Coast Heritage Trust (408 acres).
- Kittery is also the southern “anchor” of the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, with its Brave Boat Harbor division, located in northeast Kittery, covering 400 acres.
- Kittery’s scenic roads, including Route 103, are some of the town’s most treasured assets. Visitors come from far and wide to drive the winding routes and take in historic and sea-facing views.
- The town’s Conservation Commission is charged with reviewing protecting the natural resources located within the territorial limits of the town.
- The Kittery Open Space Advisory (KOSAC) is tasked with maintaining an inventory of public open space and making recommendations to the Town Manager about acquiring and/or selling/gifting/transferring this space.



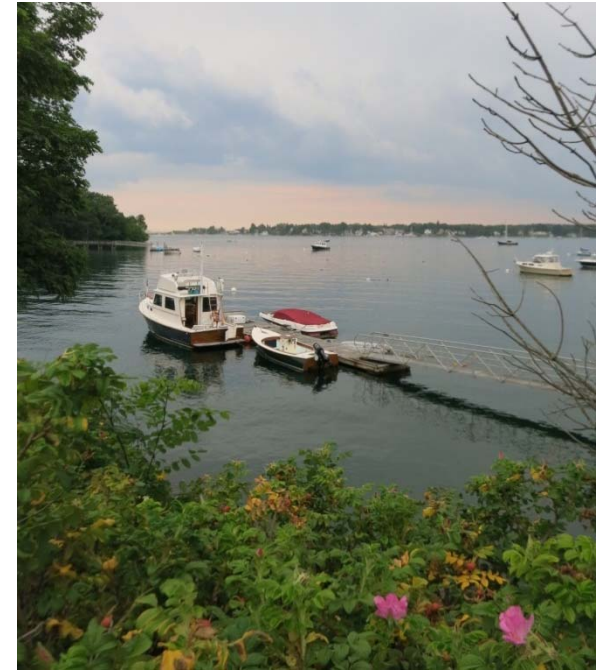
Seapoint Beach, located at the far eastern end of Kittery, is a popular recreation spot, but also a feeding area for several species of migratory birds.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Kittery’s location at the mouth of the Piscataqua and along the Atlantic coast is its most defining natural feature.
- The presence of bedrock underlying most of the town, combined with the many surface waters and associated floodplain areas, limits the extent of new development.
- The town’s small number of fresh water resources require public drinking water be supplied by wells or neighboring towns.
- While 10% of Kittery’s 30-mile coastline has been protected through efforts of several public and private entities, much of this area remains unprotected.
- The scenic quality of Route 103 is partially protected by the town’s Shoreline Overlay Zone regulation. Additional work is needed to protect scenic views and viewsheds.

RECREATION RESOURCES IN MANY FORMS

- Kittery contains 28 acres of federal and state-owned recreation facilities, including both active and passive recreation sites. Two of these sites are open to all.
- The town maintains several historic sites (Fort Foster, Wood Island) which provide recreational opportunities, as well as many athletic fields and playgrounds.
- The Kittery Community Center, opened in 2011 at the former Frisbee Elementary School on Rogers Road, provides active recreation facilities (gymnasium, fitness center) and offers recreation-oriented programs to users of all ages.
- A master plan for Kittery's athletic fields, completed in 2014, outlined the need for greater access to facilities, and need to eliminate overlap of facilities, and the need to rest fields on an ongoing basis.
- Access to the water (Atlantic Ocean, Piscataqua River and Spruce Creek) is limited by the small number of launches, slips, moorings and parking spaces near these sites.
- Kittery contains an extensive network of trails, both at formal recreation facilities, and on conservation lands. While used by many, the trails do not currently connect to one another, and are not widely publicized.
- Sportsmen and women hunt throughout the year, in approximately three-quarters of the town, including some residential areas. Hunting is not permitted in the area to the west of Haley Road and south of Interstate 95.



The Piscataqua River provides access to the Atlantic and associated maritime-related recreational activities.



The historic Rustlewood Farm, operated by the Johnson Family, covers 300 acres straddling the Kittery-Eliot line and is protected by a conservation easement.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- The popularity of Fort Foster and Fort McClary as active and passive recreation sites places demands on limited staffing.
- The one regulation size soccer field in Kittery is in very high demand and in general, the town's fields are over utilized (in part because the town does not maintain separate practice fields), complicating maintenance tasks.
- Opportunity exists to better promote the town's system of trails and to create better connections between trail segments.
- Opportunity exists to provide more access to Kittery's waterways.