



QUARRY ROAD RECREATION AREA

A Project to Benefit the Entire Community



December 10, 2008

Quarry Road Organizing Committee

Waterville, Maine

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Before us lies a rare and exciting opportunity—the possibility to create a first-class, year-round recreation area within the heart of Greater Waterville.

The timing could not be better. Recently purchased by the city, this beautiful, 120-acre property is already earmarked for outdoor recreation. It includes hills with great views, extensive fields, and gently-rolling, forested terrain that borders Messalonskee Stream. The plan is to make this outstanding property available to support four-season use by residents and students of *all* ages, abilities and incomes.

The first priority of this project is to reinvigorate a tradition of winter recreation in mid-Maine that has all but disappeared. Many residents have fond memories of enjoying winter sports on this very same piece of land over the last 70 years. This project will not only revive this tradition, but will also provide for year-round recreational opportunities.

Former Olympian biathlete John Morton, one of the world’s leading Nordic trail designers, has created a network of trails of exceptional natural beauty and flexibility, including a world-class cross-country competition loop. Located just off Interstate 95, the Quarry Road Recreation Area is easily accessible for all residents of Waterville and surrounding towns to enjoy.

Described as “the crown jewel” of the Kennebec Messalonskee Trail system begun several years ago, this project dramatically extends the reach of this riverside trail network. The shared purpose of this project and KMTrails is to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, tied to our rivers, which will improve public health and the local economy. Outdoor recreation also lifts the spirits, strengthens community bonds, and offers residents and visitors of all ages a place to go for “something fun to do.”

In this economically-depressed area, this would provide a much-needed spark of hope.

Plans for winter activities including cross-country skiing, walking, snowboarding, snowshoeing, sledding and skating are already well under way. The prospect of skiing at Quarry Road next year has led to the formation of the Central Maine Ski Club. Organized by Ski Club volunteers, the first session of cross-country skiing lessons for children is already fully enrolled and begins this month (December 2008).

Due to our fickle weather, snowmaking and snow-grooming will be essential to success at Quarry Road. Up-front investment in these services will ensure a reliable snow surface and consistent use throughout the winter months.

During the following spring, summer and fall seasons, there will be opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, hiking, walking, running, birding, mountain biking, and multi-use athletic fields.

This project has been designed to ensure access by all members of the community. Revenues will be generated via snowmaking service fees, event fees, memberships and ongoing donations, both public and private. One-quarter (\$280,000) of first-phase funding has been pledged. Full funding of this phase will bring the Quarry Road Recreation Area to life for many hundreds of people to enjoy in the near future.

MISSION

The purpose of this project is to provide a first-class, four-season, sustainable recreational area in the heart of the Greater Waterville community. It will enable people from all walks of life to enjoy the health benefits of the outdoors in an easily accessible area of natural beauty.

VISION

In our dark and cold late fall and winter months, this area will become a center for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, walking, snowboarding, skating, and sledding. In summer, spring, and fall, a variety of activities, such as hiking, biking, canoeing/kayaking, birding, and rowing will be possible. There is additional potential for athletic field development, an open air skating rink, and a lodge providing shelter, refreshments, and restroom facilities. The design encourages a multi-use, four-season facility suitable for people of all ages and abilities. Particular attention will be paid to sustainable, low-cost operations. Across socioeconomic lines, people will come together during the daytime and evening to enjoy diverse, low maintenance, low-impact recreational offerings in a beautiful natural setting.

Imagine a “typical” winter and summer week at the Quarry Road Recreation Area:

During a recent sunny winter weekend, skiers and walkers of all ages enjoy the well-groomed riverside trail. The trail’s natural beauty attracts older couples, parents with children, single adults, teenagers, local photographers and artists. The skating rink hosts two birthday parties featuring hot chocolate and skating lessons, with side trips to the sledding hill. Horse-drawn sleigh rides through the woods are popular. Olympic snowboarding champion Seth Wescott makes a special appearance to teach snowboarding to area youth. Cross-country skiers from Colby College and local high schools practice during the week. The well-lit trail permits after-hours use of all facilities. Snowmaking and snow-grooming takes place in the pre-dawn hours.

In the warmer months, the river landing is a great spot to launch kayaks and canoes. It’s a popular place to walk and picnic. Hikers exploring the Kennebec Messalonskee Trail system wend their way along the river trail. Pick-up baseball games in the field are commonplace. In a recent event, which ended with a celebration at the Quarry Road lodge, walkers raised over \$10,000 for a local cause. There is serious talk of starting a rowing club for rowers of all ages, with the encouragement of Maine’s 2008 Olympic gold medalist women rowers.

HISTORY

In some respects, this is a “back to the future” project. With about 300 vertical feet, the hill adjacent to Quarry Road attracted downhill skiers at least three times during the past 70 years. Beginning in the 1930’s with a rope tow, the hill was closed during World War II, then re-opened by veterans and the Colby Outing Club in the late 40’s. It was a popular spot again in the late 60’s/early 70’s when operated by Colby College as a lighted ski area with limited snowmaking.

Quarry Road derives its name from the 19th century quarry that was mined to obtain stone used for local construction projects such as the original CMP power station, Memorial Hall buildings in Oakland and Colby, and the Pine Grove Cemetery Chapel in Waterville. The resulting pit in the side of the hill was dramatically dubbed “the Devil’s Chair.”

Today, a new generation seeks to bring the benefits of outdoor recreation closer to home again, especially for winter activities. As a convenient and natural extension of the very successful Kennebec Messalonskee Trail network, this area is poised to become a first-class, four-season venue that is easily accessed by area residents. The groundwork has been laid, both in history and in volunteer action of recent years, to reignite the longstanding love of outdoor recreation and winter sports in the greater Waterville area. This time, this area will be open throughout the year for people from all generations and walks of life to explore and enjoy.

STATEMENT OF NEED

Our city and neighboring towns were once thriving close-knit communities. Now with the loss of pulp and paper, shoe, and textile industries, and what appears to be a deepening economic crisis, our middle class is disappearing. In one telling statistic, nearly two-thirds of Waterville's children are eligible for free and reduced school lunches.

Physically, Maine residents suffer from poor health. About one-third of adults are sedentary and overweight or obese. Sadly, the same is true of Maine's children. Obesity and Type 2 (non-hereditary) diabetes are a problem. From a mental health standpoint, the long, dark days of winter take their toll. Winter is a depressing reality for many. Winter outdoor recreation opportunities for the public remain limited or nonexistent (e.g. groomed trails for cross-country skiing or plowed pathways for winter walks), as are summer outdoor paddling (canoeing, kayaking, rowing) venues organized for public use. During the winter especially, there are few easily-accessible and affordable places for the public to go to enjoy the outdoors.

STATEMENT OF OPPORTUNITIES & BENEFITS

The immediate opportunity is the availability of 120 acres near the heart of Waterville for outdoor recreation activities.

The following benefits are anticipated:

- Improve public health and overall quality of life
- Improve the local economy by attracting visitors to Central Maine
- Provide multiple and diverse outdoor recreation for people of all abilities and ages
- Create new recreational opportunities and resources for youth, schools and colleges
- Strengthen human bonds and forge new connections within the community
- Provide a way for people to reconnect with the natural world

One of the best-known ways to improve mental and physical health is to get outdoors.

A national study released by The Outdoor Foundation found that Americans who participate in at least one outdoor activity on a regular basis reap mental and physical health benefits. Outdoor activities greatly enrich lives by reducing stress levels and connecting people with family and friends. People are more likely to be active throughout their lives if they start outdoor activities at a young age.

The State of Maine Department of Conservation is promoting outdoor recreation in its "Take It Outside" initiative. The Quarry Road Recreation Area could become a model for "taking it outside" in Maine, in New England and perhaps beyond. This project "raises the bar" for sustainable recreation trails, because it uniquely combines the following features:

- Builds upon and extends the existing Kennebec Messalonskee Trails network,
- Implements a world-class trail design,
- Meets multiple needs of nonprofit community organizations and area schools,
- Ensures a reliable snow surface during winter months,
- Provides public access,
- Maximizes efficient use of public and private resources for public benefit, and
- Generates a new source of economic value in the region.

MILESTONES COMPLETED TO DATE

- Approximately 100 acres purchased by the City of Waterville and dedicated for public recreational use.
- Adjacent 20-acre parcel purchased by City (Nov. 2008) to add to the recreational property.
- One-quarter of Phase I funding (\$280,000) pledged.
- Preliminary design and feasibility studies completed for cross country running/ski trail network.
- Permits pending from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection for road and trail construction. Trail clearing to begin during the winter of '09.
- Central Maine Ski Club formed to provide ongoing teaching assistance and volunteers for the skiing program.
- First ski education program for students in grades K-8 organized and fully-enrolled for the winter '08 -'09 season.
- Quarry Road upgrade progressing with in-kind assistance from the City.
- First local, institutional partners secured.
- Organizing committee for Quarry Road Recreational Area formed.

The next steps are to raise funds, start teaching area children and adults how to cross country ski during this upcoming winter season (2008-09), clear the first trail at Quarry Road, and have Phase I completely operational with snowmaking capability for the winter 2009-10 season.

GOAL OF THIS FUNDRAISING EFFORT

The goal of this fundraising effort is to quietly raise all Phase I funds needed (see Objectives and Financial Needs for description of Phases) before seeking the balance of funds for Phases II and III publicly. \$950,000 is the immediate goal. This amount will fully fund Phase I, open this recreational area to the public for the winter of 2009-10, and lay a firm foundation for Phase II and Phase III fundraising. To date (December 10, 2008), \$280,000 has been pledged.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS RE: FACILITY NEEDS

Trail Construction

In the design of the winter facility, a core size of critical mass is necessary. There must be enough trail to warrant investment in snowmaking and grooming infrastructure. It must be large enough with a consistent, quality product to attract participants. 3-5km would be the minimum. 5-10km could bring the facility to a world class level.

Snowmaking and Grooming

In these days of global warming, with variable and often icy conditions, a limited yet vigorous snowmaking and grooming system would guarantee a safe, predictable snow surface for winter activities. Consistency of the snow product is essential to allow orderly scheduling of school programs, training schedules, and hosting high school and collegiate events. Snowmaking infrastructure also allows a sliding, snowboard area that would appeal to yet another group of families and winter enthusiasts. It gives people a place to go and something to do outside – in the winter. A well-designed snowmaking infrastructure with the ability to make snow quickly will allow the facility to reach maximum potential while keeping operating costs to a minimum.

Lighting

Low impact lighting would be installed for evening use during the darkest months of the year.

OBJECTIVES TO MEET THESE GOALS

This effort is organized around three phases of project development and fundraising:

Phase I, Year One (Winter 2008-10), THE CATALYST

Objective: Construct first trail for public use. Start ski instruction programs for area children and adults.

Phase I begins with the design and construction of the four-season trail system with the focus on developing a strong, viable cross-country ski network with reliable, snowmaking capability. This would utilize areas near the river or hillside unsuitable for other recreational venues. Adults and children in grades K-8 will be offered cross-country ski lessons through the Central Maine Ski Club, beginning the winter of 2008-09.

Phase I Plan

1. Reconstruct Quarry Road to the base of the field for access (in progress, scheduled for completion by the City of Waterville, Fall 2008)
2. Design and construct a multi-use trail loop of approximately 3-5 km between the river and the road from the Highway (95) overpass to and including the field at the base of what was the former ski slope. This would offer a very accessible trail for all ages and abilities, portions of which will be made American Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible.
3. Develop and deliver year one ski instruction program.
4. Construct parking areas at both ends to facilitate accessibility.

5. Install a quality snowmaking system that would provide predictable, ice-free surface for skiing, snowshoeing or walking.
6. Provide state of the art snow-grooming equipment to maintain all developed trails.
7. Build a suitable storage shed to allow equipment to remain on site.
8. Install low impact lighting on a portion of the trail, further enhancing availability for those unable to use the facility during daytime hours.
9. Found and organize a ski club to assist Waterville Parks and Recreation with maintenance and management of facility.
10. Create a limited area for sliding and snowboarding.
11. Complete three-phase power installation.

Phase II, Year 2 (2010-11) BUILD ON SUCCESS

Objective: Provide shelter and expand facilities & programs.

1. Construction of a no frills shelter or lodge to provide gathering areas, changing rooms and restroom facilities.
2. Expand the parking areas for improved, easier access to fields and facility.
3. Grading and seeding of athletic fields.
4. Expansion of activities including but not limited to; canoeing, kayaking and crew (possible Colby involvement), volleyball, horseshoes, etc.
5. Probable expansion of snowmaking system to enhance winter activities.
6. Construct outdoor ice rink.

Phase III, Year 3 and beyond (2011) MAXIMIZE POTENTIAL

Objective: Make any adjustments, enhancements and additions to the trails and facilities to improve accessibility and versatility. Grow and adjust to the demand. Keep options open.

PHASE I PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

1. Offer cross country ski lessons to adults and to children in grades K-8
2. Create a mini-snowboarding and sliding hill
3. Provide a reliable product via snowmaking and grooming

MARKETING & EVALUATION

A full marketing plan will be developed for each phase of development. Some key marketing objectives, strategies, and outcomes for pre-Phase I and Phase I are described here:

Pre-Phase I:

Increase public awareness of the Quarry Road Recreation Area in its early development stages to build public curiosity, interest and support. Use existing communications networks with community collaborators and local media to keep the community informed and excited about the progress and possibilities of this project. Build community partnerships to support and inform the project, by meeting with community leaders, identifying common interests, convening a Quarry Road Organizing Committee and requesting letters of support. Attain full enrollment for first session of cross country ski lessons.

Phase I Objective: Increase usage to trigger Phase II development. Establish measurable marketing outcomes for Quarry Road Recreation Area usage, including, but not limited to the following (to take skiing as one example):

1. All area school cross country ski teams informed and encouraged to use the facility. Colby College and area high schools pay fees to use the facility for training and events.
2. All area residents are informed of the availability of the area and how to access it. Over 200 new skiers, including children and adults, are enrolled and taught how to cross country ski during the first full year of operations.
3. All area media routinely informed of ski conditions, usage statistics, special events.
4. Usage statistics are maintained and increase steadily, both in informal, public use and planned (organizational) use.
5. Demand for ski lessons among both children and adults expands program.
6. Central Maine Ski Club members increase from the core group to several hundred.
7. The number of volunteer Ski Club instructors increases to meet demand.

Specific marketing strategies will vary with each objective and may include:

Fliers distributed to area schools; personal meetings with athletic directors; broadcast TV interviews with organizers during prime time local news, e.g. WABI-TV Ch. 5; cable TV public access reports via high school media departments; regular news releases to local and statewide media; Central Maine Ski Club word-of-mouth; inclusion in nonprofit organization newsletters and calendars, e.g. Alford Youth Center, Waterville Main Street, local clubs; special events, e.g. snowboard signings and special appearances of Maine’s Olympic athletes, such as Seth Wescott and Eleanor Logan (who have already agreed to assist). To measure efficacy, marketing surveys will be developed and analyzed with assistance of local business, and usage statistics maintained.

STAFFING

Waterville Parks & Recreation Department will be head of operations and will provide administrative support, staff, and trail maintenance. Members of the Central Maine Ski Club will provide volunteers and technical assistance for cross-country skiing programs. Additional technical assistance is available from Maine Winter Sports Center, the New England Nordic Ski Association, and Colby College. It is expected that creation of this recreational area will generate jobs over the next few years in the areas of skiing instruction, event coordination, maintenance and management.

GOVERNANCE

The Quarry Park Recreation Area is owned by the City of Waterville and will be under the supervision of the Parks and Recreation Department.

BUDGET

REVENUES (Projections)	Annual Operating	Comments
Service Fees	\$6,000-\$20,000	Fees from area teams, charges to area towns
Event Fees	\$500	Per event, head count-related
Training	\$1000-\$5000	Teams from outside immediate area, by head count
Donations	\$10,000	Public & private
Memberships & sponsorships	\$2000-\$5000	

Future: Rentals of skis, snow-shoes, skates, tubing, sleds	N/A	
TOTAL REVENUES	\$19,500-\$40,500	
EXPENSES		
Snowmaking & Grooming	\$20,000-\$40,000	HKD estimate, dependent on length of trail
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$20,000-40,000	

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL NEEDS

PHASE I CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Quarry Road reconstruction: \$40,000-50,000 for materials (gravel, culverts, etc) with substantial amount of the labor costs to be provided by City.
2. Trail design and construction: Trails 16 to 20 feet wide, 5 to 10 km, estimated cost of \$50,000-\$150,000, depending on length, culverts, bridges, etc. (Design from Morton Trails available upon request.)
3. Parking areas: Small areas at each end of Quarry Road to facilitate access, \$50,000.
4. Snowmaking system: Design prepared by Michael Hussey, HKD Snowmakers, \$350,000-\$500,000, depending on length of trail. This is a vigorous system, capable of making a lot of snow in a short period of time, to help minimize labor and operating costs.
 - a. Grooming equipment: Piston Bully or equivalent (used), with tiller, necessary to machine icy conditions and move snow, \$75,000-\$100,000.
 - b. Snowmobile with YTS Ginzugroomer, \$15,000-\$25,000.
5. Storage shed for grooming equipment: Advisable for protection from weather, vandals, as well as for maintenance of equipment. \$50,000-\$125,000.
6. Lighting: Necessary due to short days, short season, people with day jobs. Coverage depends on length of trail, cost to be determined. \$20,000-\$30,000.
7. Ski Club: Volunteers
8. Sliding and snowboarding area: Mini snow-board park, rails. \$5,000-\$10,000.
9. Three-phase power installation: \$35,000-\$50,000.
10. Miscellaneous administration costs: \$20,000.

Totals for Phase I: **\$710,000-\$950,000**

PHASE II CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Shelter and Lodge: For winter and summer usage, \$85,000-\$275,000.
2. Parking area expansion: \$50,000-\$100,000.
3. Athletic fields grading and seeding: \$250,000-\$500,000
4. Expansion of activities: \$50,000

5. Expansion of snowmaking: \$50,000-\$200,000
6. Outdoor ice rink: \$100,000

Totals for Phase II: **\$585,000-\$1,225,000**

PHASE III CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

Make any adjustments, enhancements and additions to the trails and facilities to improve accessibility and versatility. Grow and adjust to demand. Costs to be determined.

NAMED-GIVING OPPORTUNITIES— Naming opportunities start at \$25,000 and include the two major trail loops, the cross country skiing stadium area, the lodge, and the alpine/sledding hill area.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

This effort is inspiring community-wide collaboration between private and public entities. Early supporters include:

- Kennebec Messalonskee Trails, Inc.
- City of Waterville
- Central Maine Ski Club
- New England Nordic Ski Association
- Alford Youth Center
- Colby College
- MaineGeneral

In addition, management within the following Maine organizations have offered their assistance: Maine Department of Conservation, Sunday River Ski Area, Sugarloaf Ski Area, Maine Winter Sports Center.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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