

2014

City of Auburn, Maine

Integrated Planning
Solutions Team



FINAL JOINT LAND USE STUDY

For Area Surrounding
Maine Army National Guard Training Facility &
Mount Apatite Park
Mount Apatite Road, Auburn, Maine

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Acknowledgements

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Acronym Glossary

AG	Agricultural and Resource Protection Zone
ALT	Androscoggin Land Trust
ACOE	US Army Corps of Engineers
ASLL	Auburn Suburban Little League
ATRC	Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CETA	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
CHP	Controlled Humidity Preservation
DoD	Department of Defense
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
GIS	Geographic Information System
GRC	Garfield Road Complex
JLUS	Joint Land Use Study
LID	Low Impact Development
LMF	Land for Maine’s Future
MaineDOT	Maine Department of Transportation
MEARNG	Maine Army National Guard
METL	Mission Essential Task List
MHPC	Maine Historic Preservation Commission
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
NCO	Non-commissioner Officer
NIMBY	Not In My Backyard
NRPA	Natural Resource Protection Act
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
OEA	Office of Economic Adjustment
SM	Soldier’s Manual
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
WTBD	Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills

Chronology of Installation and Park Development

1868	Mining Operations begin at Mount Apatite
1902	Exploratory Mining continues
1926	US Government acquires 154 acres for use as training site for military Personnel
1950, 1951 and 1972	US Government leases three unimproved parcels totaling 16 acres
1926 through 1960s	Firing ranges active at training site
1962	Facility Maintenance Shops built
1970s	City acquires 300 acres in several transactions creating Mount Apatite Park
1976	City receives grant to construct snowmobile trails, a snowmobile shelter, picnic grounds, and sanitary facilities
1976	Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) employees help with trail clearing
1977	City Council and Andy Valley Sno Gypsies enter into lease agreement to allow construction of clubhouse and snowmobile trails
1989	City and US Army agree to land exchange – 42.5 acres of Army National Guard land (where Auburn Suburban Little League Fields were built) for 104.5 acres of city land. (This exchange did not occur due to environmental issues) (See Appendix Mount Apatite Multiple Use Recreation Plan, 1991)
1989	MEARNG leases land on which Garfield Road Complex (GRC) was built to the City; lease expired in 1995
1989	City leased GRC to Auburn Suburban Little League for 25 years with right to renew for additional 25 years
1991	City commissions a Master Plan for the Park funded by the Land and Water Conservation Act
1994	The 3.2m (5k) multi-use trail for hiking and cross country skiing is constructed
1997	Trails to the quarry were added and signs were posted
1997	State of Maine designates Mount Apatite quarries as a Critical Area under its Critical Areas Program (now called Maine Natural Areas Program)
2008	MEARNG Humidity Controlled Preservation shelters built
2009	MEARNG firing range closed until upgrade or repair is funded
2012	Auburn JLUS funded by Office of Economic Adjustment, Department of Defense

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Introduction

In August 2010, the Maine Army National Guard (MEARNG) approached the City of Auburn suggesting that it apply for a planning grant through the Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) to ***“identify incompatible land uses, develop plans and identify solutions in order to maintain the operational and training utility of the [Army National Guard’s Auburn] training site”***. The MEARNG was particularly concerned about the existing and future impacts of adjacent land uses, including but not limited to Auburn recreation facilities including the ballfields at the Garfield Road Complex and Mount Apatite Park access, on the training site. Based on increasing activity at the Complex, in the Park and on growth in the immediate vicinity, the City agreed to pursue this planning opportunity and submitted a preliminary grant request to the OEA.

With a positive response from the OEA, the City issued a Request for Proposals in the summer of 2012 asking interested consultants to develop a scope of work and budget to undertake this study. After a competitive process, the City, in coordination with the MEARNG, selected the Integrated Planning Solutions Team (Study Team) to undertake this study. A final application was submitted to OEA in September 2012 and a notice to proceed was issued to the Study Team in October 2012.

The **goals of both the City of Auburn and the MEARNG** are to ensure the sustainability of the military mission, to accommodate competing interests in a mutually agreeable way, and to ensure that the public health, safety and welfare of the community is protected. The outcome of this study will ensure better future coordination of local community development with the activities of the local military installation.

The City of Auburn is “experiencing increased rates of development” and intends to implement measures that will manage development impacts in this area before they unduly impact the effectiveness of the training center. The City recognizes that as more development occurs in this area, the greater the potential for conflicts. Avoiding, minimizing and mitigating existing and potential future conflicts are of paramount importance.

The Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) started with Auburn Mayor Jonathan LaBonte appointing a Policy Committee made up of residents, business people and representatives of stakeholder organizations. In addition, the Study Team worked closely with a Technical Committee involving staff from both the City and MEARNG who could provide information. The Policy Committee, charged with an advisory role, met monthly from December 2012 through August 2012 and twice in 2014. A study website hosted by the City and a Facebook page, managed by the Study Team, among other public outreach and input activities were used to provide and collect information.

The JLUS makes recommendations to MEARNG and the City including policy changes to the Auburn Comprehensive Plan. The JLUS recommendations were approved in May 2014 by the Policy and Technical Committees and presented to the Auburn Planning Board and City Council in May and June of 2014 for additional public hearing and adoption.

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Executive Summary

Joint Land Use Studies (JLUS) are cooperative planning activities involving military installations, the host municipality (ies) and affected stakeholders. A JLUS is intended to reduce potential conflicts between a military installation and its host community, while still accommodating the community's preferred growth pattern and adjacent land use activities, and protecting the general public's health and safety, without compromising the operational missions of the installation and its benefits to the City. The City of Auburn in conjunction with the Maine Army National Guard (MEARNG) conducted this JLUS with a focus on MEARNG's Auburn training site and the surrounding Mount Apatite areas in order to facilitate:

- **Common Ground:** Communication among the MEARNG and the City and stakeholders is needed to promote an understanding of the economic and physical relationship between the installation and its neighbors.
- **Collaboration:** Collaborative planning among the MEARNG and the City and stakeholders is needed in order to safeguard the mission of the installation from future incompatible development and to inform the municipality's policies regarding adjacent land use activities.
- **Strategic Actions:** Strategies for reducing the impacts of incompatible activities on the community and military operations are needed as well as tools to support compatibility in the future.

To accomplish these objectives, the collaborative approach has identified that strategies should:

1. Improve safety and welfare of all users (recreators and military);

2. Eliminate existing and avoid future conflicts between military operations and recreation activities;
3. Guide growth in immediate vicinity in support of these facilities through land use policies and regulations;
4. Guide decisions about the types and locations of recreational facilities and operational rules to help minimize conflict with MEARNG installation and operations;
5. Manage public costs while optimizing public access to the City's resources and reducing conflicts with or impacts on MEARNG;
6. Enhance partnership opportunities;
7. Increase public awareness of how the MEARNG installation and adjacent recreational facilities are used as well as regarding potential conflicts, concerns, and desired etiquette;
8. Enhance experiences of recreators provided that needs of the military installation are also met; and
9. Enhance economic opportunities for existing and future businesses that provide services to the installation when those opportunities coincide with the needs of MEARNG and the City.

The City of Auburn applied for and received a grant from the Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment to explore ways to address conflicts between the MEARNG's Auburn training site and the City owned Mount Apatite Park and the Garfield Road Complex (GRC), with its ballfields and parking areas that currently exists on Department of Defense (DoD) land.

Over the course of several months, working with a Policy Committee made up of community residents and interest groups, the Study Team identified numerous concerns to both the MEARNG and the community.

The Challenges:

- The GRC is on federal land; while past authorization allowed this use, no license to the City currently exists.
- Parking at the GRC is inadequate during certain activities and at times spills onto Garfield Road.
- The City had once committed to a land swap when the GRC was built but because of environmental monitoring needs associated with wetlands impacts and the loss of institutional memory the land swap never occurred. (In 1991 the Mount Apatite Multiple Use Recreation Plan cited the ratio for the land swap as 1:2.45)
- The City Park is made up of several parcels acquired over time. One parcel is deed restricted for recreation use only; another is restricted for public use only. These restrictions, along with physical improvements on them, affect which parcels could be considered in a land swap.
- Mount Apatite Road is the main access to the GRC and to the Mount Apatite recreation trails; it is also the same access used by the MEARNG.
- While the City's Comprehensive Plan recommends a consolidated athletic field complex, there is no room at Mount Apatite Park's GRC to add more athletic fields and the expense to relocate the 5 existing fields is likely to be prohibitive in the near term.
- Any land swap at the north of the complex could require the relocation of some portions of the 5K trail unless the City is granted a current use easement by the DoD.
- Most recreators access the park trail network by crossing the engineer training area or the land navigation area of the MEARNG installation.
- Recreators are confused once in the Park and have been known to cross onto MEARNG training land.
- Recreators driving to the Park have difficulty knowing which access point should be used.
- Recreators who walk to the Park must do so at the roadway edge where are few if any shoulders, sidewalks and crosswalks.
- Mine Road has very poor sight distance and no turning area.
- Small Road access is very remote and underutilized making it vulnerable to vandalism.
- Park land extends to Hatch Road but the location of that frontage is on a hill and curve making it unsafe to park there.
- Several unmarked access points exist and cross private property to get to city land.
- Vernal pools and wetlands are located on the training site making the relocation of vehicular access and parking away from Mount Apatite Road a challenge.
- Relocated trail access on portions of the MEARNG training site will need to cross wetlands – this will require permitting and additional cost but will provide a different experience for recreators.
- An inactive small arms range will be modernized and reactivated in the future; a communications protocol is needed to inform would be land owners of this eventuality.
- Relocating an access point for the MEARNG to eliminate conflict with the GRC is expensive and is considered a low priority at this time.
- There is no communications or emergency protocol between the City and MEARNG today potentially exacerbating conflict when special events by either party are planned or in the event of an emergency.
- The Comprehensive Plan does not acknowledge the MEARNG facility nor

include information about existing and future operations. Uses identified in the Comprehensive Plan for the future land use zone covering the study area are appropriate and should be maintained.

The Preferred Solutions:

- **The DoD/MEARNG should**

- Transfer the GRC's 28 +/- acres to the City.
- Clearly mark its boundary and clear zone.

- **The City should**

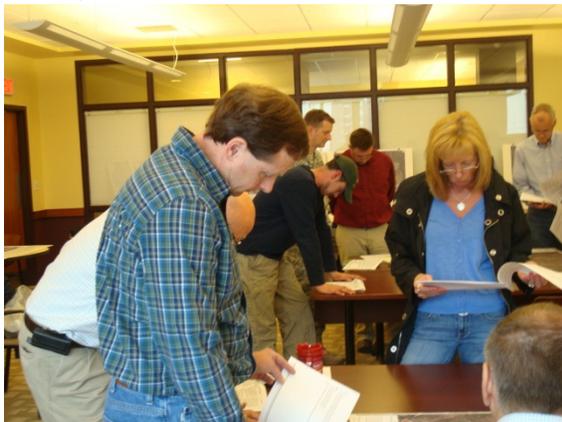
- Acquire the GRC provided that any Mount Apatite Park land transferred in an exchange is authorized by the DoD by easement for current use.
 - [If the DoD does not authorize current use of exchanged land in the Park, the City will limit its land swap ratio to 1:1 or re-consider the option of relocating the GRC.]
- Acquire in fee or by easement from the DoD a swath of land along the southern boundary of the Auburn training site beginning at the southeastern corner and extending all the way to city land (intended to mean a swath that is somewhat parallel to Minot Avenue); it should be wide enough to accommodate a trail head and multi-use path from Garfield Road to Mount Apatite Park land.
- Install and maintain a wayfinding system on nearby streets to guide recreators to the determined official access point(s).
- Install and maintain a wayfinding system within the park to keep recreators from wandering into MEARNG training areas.

- Work with willing abutters to formalize and improve access and increase buffers. Small parking areas and appropriate signage should be added as appropriate.
- Improve the parking area and trail head at the snowmobile club on Small Road.
- Plan to install multi use shoulders for bicyclists and pedestrian on roads leading to official access points.
- Plan to add sidewalks on the north side of Stevens Mill Road, the east side of Garfield Road from Minot Avenue to Stevens Mill Road and on the west side of Garfield Road from Minot Avenue to the proposed new trail access point at the southeastern corner of the DoD land. The City should also plan to add and/or extend sidewalks along both sides of Minot Avenue.
- Install crosswalks across Stevens Mill Road and across Garfield Road at Stevens Mill Road and from one side of Garfield Road to the other at the proposed new trail head at the southeastern corner of DoD land.
- Appoint the Recreation Advisory Board to oversee the implementation of the JLUS and to pursue grant opportunities.
- Amend the Comprehensive Plan to include an inventory of the MEARNG installation; the name of the future land use zone should be changed to reflect the existence of the operation.
- Reinstall safety signs at the quarries.
- Review mining rules to allow for more mineral finding opportunities.
- Negotiate a renewed short term lease for continued use of the GRC until a more permanent solution is in place.

- **The City and MEARNG should work together to**

- Develop kiosks, trail maps and web-based information about both facilities and make these available to the public.
- Coordinate activities and emergency response protocols.
- Host opportunities for the area neighborhood and surrounding community to learn what is new at the Park and Auburn training site.
- Develop and undertake an aggressive public awareness and outreach program.

Policy Committee members during workshop to develop recommendations



The Partners:

The following entities and interests provided guidance throughout the planning effort.

- The City of Auburn – Planning, Public Works, Engineering, Emergency Services
- The Maine Army National Guard
- The Andy-Valley Sno Gypsies
- The Taylor Pond Association
- The Androscoggin Land Trust
- The Auburn Suburban Little League

- Private residential and business property owners.

Public Involvement:

In addition to the Policy Committee made up of Auburn residential and business representatives appointed by Auburn’s Mayor LaBonte, the JLUS webpage was hosted on the City website and the Study Team hosted a study Facebook page. Two surveys attracted nearly 300 responses. Several press releases were issued, posters were hung in various locations and a JLUS Open House was hosted at Auburn Hall. A public hearing on the preliminary plan was held by the Planning Board; the City Council was invited to attend this joint meeting. In August, MEARNG’s leadership was provided a presentation on the preliminary plan. At the August 2013 Technical and Policy Committee meetings, the MEARNG requested suspension of the JLUS until the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) completed a land value appraisal for the GRC. The MEARNG was unable to predict how long the suspension would need to be. The City agreed to suspend further work until January 2014.

In January 2014, the study process was restarted. Technical and Policy Committees met in March to guide the final report. The Policy Committee met again in mid-May to review the final report and voted to forward it to the Planning Board and City Council for final action in late spring and early summer 2014.

Chapter 1 – Purpose (*Why This / Why Now*)

“An Investment in the National Guard is a great value for America, and we must sustain America’s Guard as a ready, reliable and accessible operational force.”
General McKinley, fmr Chief, National Guard Bureau

Army National Guard training areas are critical to the defense of the nation. They ensure that service members have the proper training in order to serve the roles they are called upon to fulfill. For Auburn, this importance is heightened by the virtue of its location as an abutter to a well regarded and well used recreation area and long standing residential neighborhood.

Finding ways to increase compatibility between two important and abutting public service functions with uniquely different missions can be challenging. While the Mount Apatite Recreation Area promotes the carefree enjoyment of the outdoors, the MEARNG training facility is focused on protecting national security. These two uses cannot be more different and so the clear delineation of interaction between the two uses is a serious matter.

The purposes of this Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) are to:

- 1) Identify and evaluate the incompatible land use activities associated with the existing MEARNG Training Site, and Mount Apatite Recreation Area, including the Auburn Suburban Little League (ASLL) ballfields and parking area known as the Garfield Road Complex (GRC).
- 2) Assess the effectiveness of the existing comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance to determine their effectiveness on protecting both facilities from incompatible future land development.

- 3) Develop new policies, plans and strategies to address the existing and avoid or minimize potential future incompatibility.
- 4) Consider the operational needs and training utility of the MEARNG training site and plan for its maintenance at a minimum and improvement at an optimum.
- 5) Ensure better future coordination between community development interests and MEARNG operational needs.

The outcomes of this study are also designed to be implemented through a strengthened partnership between the City and MEARNG.

The MEARNG established a presence in Auburn in 1926 when the Federal Government purchased 154 acres. Additional lands were later added by lease and now the Auburn training site operates within roughly 170 acres. But the MEARNG’s ability to meet its mission at this location is strained.

In Maine, the Army National Guard training sites average 331 acres. In view of this, the Auburn site is more than 50% below the state average. Ideally, MEARNG’s Auburn site should be in the range of 650 acres resulting in a deficit of nearly 480 acres for optimal training. It is not feasible to meet this ideal given its current location and the abutting land ownership. However, the MEARNG is intent on ensuring that service members have the facilities necessary to gain proper training.

As such, MEARNG is working with the City of Auburn through this JLUS to improve the effectiveness of the Auburn training site. The City and MEARNG share the goals of ensuring the sustainability of the military mission, accommodating competing interests in a mutually agreeable way, and ensuring that the health, safety and welfare of the community is also protected.

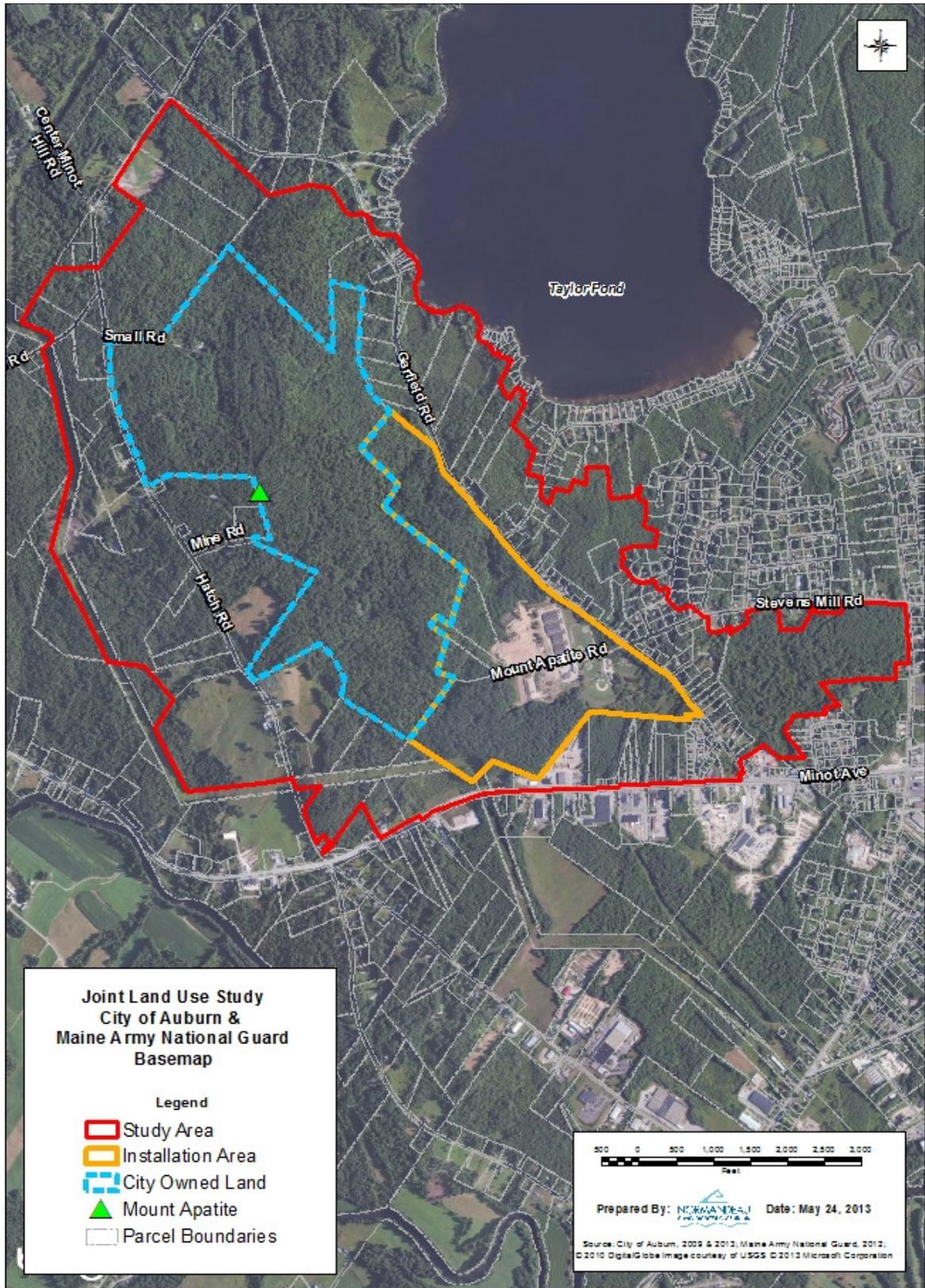


Figure 1.1 Study area (red) showing city (aqua dash) and federal lands (gold)

For purposes of this effort, the community is considered to be the users of the GRC and the Mount Apatite trail system as well as an area surrounding the lands held by the City of Auburn and the Federal Government as depicted on the study area map. See Figure 1.1.

In addition to the training land area deficit, roughly 28 acres of installation land are currently used as ballfields and associated parking. See Figure 1.2. The GRC was built for the City by the MEARNG in the late 1980s on



Figure 1.2 Auburn Suburban Little League Field at the Garfield Road Complex

installation land. In exchange for this, the City committed to a land swap, but that transfer was stalled due to environmental mitigation and monitoring needs that were completed in 2001.

This land is not only unavailable for MEARNG use, but the main vehicular drive (Mount Apatite Road) for the military personnel is one and the same as that used by recreators to access the GRC and Mount Apatite Park. The peak use of the GRC, while a shorter season, has some overlap with MEARNG use of the training site.

Visitors who use the City owned Mount Apatite Park trails have several options for accessing the trails and former mine sites.

However, the historically preferred access is through Mount Apatite Road. Hikers, bicyclists, birders, joggers, gem collectors, cross country skiers and numerous others who wish to enter Mount Apatite Park must pass through installation land for some 2000' through heavy equipment maneuvering training areas (Figure 1.3) to reach the main gate of the Park. This conflict poses a safety risk to all concerned, impedes the effectiveness of training and limits the enjoyment of users entering the Park for recreational purposes.

Further exacerbating the risk, park and training land boundaries are not well marked. Users of Mount Apatite Park have a history of utilizing land surrounding and within the training site. This has limited the training



Figure 1.3 Recreator passing through engineer training area

utility of the site as unsuspecting recreators find themselves in an active training location; and has hampered recreator enjoyment of the Park. This conflict, along with recent and potential residential development of abutting lands, is particularly important when considering MEARNG's plan to upgrade and repair the non-standard small arms range in a future fiscal year. See Figure 1.4. The City and MEARNG are intent with minimizing the conflicts inherent on this and other training activities.



Figure 1.4 Modern MEARNG Baffled Range

Additional encroachments to the MEARNG installation have been occurring for decades. Snowmobile trails and worn but unmarked walking paths from abutting neighborhoods often unwittingly cross unmarked MEARNG boundaries to join other well established trails on city property never considering the potential risk.

Economic Impacts:

The training facility and its adjoining uses are important to Auburn's economy. While no economic benefit analysis was conducted as part of this study the following information strongly suggests that Auburn benefits substantially from these activities.

Training Facility:

MEARNG hosts roughly 800 personnel at this facility for training purposes every year. Based on a report published by the MEARNG, the MEARNG activities statewide generated more than \$195M in economic impact in fiscal year 2012¹. That sum included almost \$44M in personnel, another nearly \$39M in military construction and just over \$112.5M in operations and maintenance. Of the \$44M attributed to personnel, it is estimated that just over \$3M (or 7.4%) can be attributed to

¹ Economic Impact of the Auburn Training Site, 2013
JLUS, prepared by MEARNG

the Auburn training site and includes drill pay for training, active Army National Guard Reserve pay and other programs. In terms of Auburn training site operations and maintenance, it is estimated that almost \$4.9M (or 4.3% of statewide total) is generated in civilian pay and facility upkeep. There were no construction dollars spent in Auburn in FY 2012; the last military construction project executed at the Auburn training site was in FY 2008 in the amount of \$6.8M. In the future, the MEARNG intends to upgrade its Auburn firing range at an estimated cost of \$1.5M.

Sports Facilities:

According to the National Association of



Figure 1.5 Controlled Humidity Preservation Buildings

Sports Commissions, American families spent \$7 billion traveling to youth sports tournaments during 2010. That amounts to about 10 percent of national leisure travel industry expenditures and spending on attending such tournaments is growing at a rate of 4 percent annually.²

Also, during 2010, according to the National Sporting Goods Association, 280 million children between 7-18 years of age

² Don Schumacher – National Association of Sports Commissions – [Game On! The Impact of Youth Sports on a Regional Economy](#), September 18, 2012

participated at least twice in one or more of 17 sports activities. The NSGA survey reports



Figure 1.6 Sports team ready for play

that over 26.9 million children participated in baseball and 10.8 million participated in softball.³

No readily available economic impact data specific to Maine was found.

Recreation:

According to research conducted by David Weinstein for the Outdoor Industry Association⁴, mountain biking is a strong component of the recreation economy. Nationally, mountain biking provides:

- 6.1 million American jobs
- \$646 billion yearly spending in outdoor recreation
- \$39.9 billion in federal tax revenue
- \$39.7 billion in state / local tax revenue

Though economic impact data specific to Maine is not readily available, in nearby East Burke, Vermont, the Kingdom Trails in Northeast Vermont undertook an economic assessment of its facility on the local economy. While Kingdom Trails charges \$15

³ National Sporting Goods Association (www.nsga.org)

⁴ International Mountain Biking Association (www.imba.com)

for a day pass or \$75 for a season pass, the facility generates far more revenue in the region through meals and lodging by trail riders. Tim Tierney, Kingdom Trails Executive Director indicates “It’s about a hundred dollars a visitor a day, conservatively, and last year with 49,000 biker visits, we figure it brings in about five million dollars to the local economy.”⁵ A link to area information about lodging, camping, restaurants, groceries, bike shops, rentals, and gear, local attractions, area activities and real estate agencies on the Kingdom Trails’ website helps cement the linkage between the mountain bike trails facility and the surrounding communities. Kingdom Trails was voted the Best Mountain Bike Trail Network in North America recently by Bike Magazine, named Best of New England by Boston Magazine Travel & Life, and also won the Editors’ Choice in 2011 by Yankee Magazine Travel Guide to New England.

Bob Meyers, Executive Director of the Maine Snowmobile Association, says “It will be several more months before registration totals for the (2013) season are fully accounted for, but as of early February, resident registrations were at 44,897 - that’s 65% ahead of where we were at the same



Figure 1.7 Andy Valley Sno Gypsies Snowmobilers

⁵ http://www.vpr.net/news_detail/94796/mountain-bikers-fuel-northeast-kingdom-economy/

time last year. Non-resident season registrations were at 11,108; that's a whopping 115% increase over the same time last year. Non-resident 3-day registrations were at 999, 271% ahead of last year.”⁶

In an article published in January 2013, Deidre Fleming of the Portland Press Herald cites that snowmobiling is a \$325 million dollar industry for Maine providing 2,300 full time jobs. The article further notes that Maine attracts somewhere between 80,000 and 100,000 riders onto 14,000 miles of snowmobile trails. “Before last winter's mild season, Maine's snowmobile registration topped 90,000 three of the previous four years, hitting an all time high of 101,000 in 2008.”

In the late 1990s, Professor Stephen D. Reiling and Graduate Assistants Matthew Kotchen and Rod L. Bennett from the Department of Resource Economics and Policy at the University of Maine at Orono compiled data on The Economic Impact of Snowmobiling in Maine⁷. The study, involving two surveys, was designed to measure the economic impact of snowmobiling in Maine during the 1995-96 season. They report that at that time, the total economic impact was \$225,973,240 in expenditures and 2,700 full-time equivalent jobs.⁸

In 2012, the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) released an economic impact assessment of Maine's Land for Maine's Future program.⁹ It concluded that snowmobiling supports 3,600 jobs and generates \$273 million in

snowmobile-related expenditures and over \$400 million in total economic impact in Maine. These figures are somewhat different



Figure 1.8 Unauthorized trail through land navigation area at Auburn training site

from those cited in the Portland Press Herald article, one estimating more jobs and the other generating higher expenditures, but both sources note the significant economic effect of the industry in the state. The TPL study also found that wildlife watching supports more than 15,000 jobs and generates \$575 million in retail sales and \$286 million in salaries and wages. It also notes that the “entire outdoor recreation industry is an integral component to a vibrant Maine economy ...generat[ing] \$210 million in annual state tax revenue, and produc[ing] nearly \$2.95 billion annually in retail sales and services across the state” and totaling 7.4% of all retail sales in the state.¹⁰

The TPL also commissioned a study in the late 1990s titled the Economic Benefits of Park and Open Space. One section in the report cites the benefits of land conservation. Instead of costing money, conserving open

⁶ <http://www.mesnow.com/TheMSA.html>

⁷

www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/gtr/gtr_ne241/gtr_ne241_073.pdf

⁸ www.tpl.org/publications/books-reports/park-benefits/the-economic-benefits-of-parks.html

⁹ <http://cloud.tpl.org/pubs/local-maine-conseconomics-2012.pdf>

¹⁰ Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2007. State-Level Economic Contributions of Active Outdoor Recreation – Technical Report on Methods and Findings. Prepared by Southwick Associates, Inc. 8 types of activities were considered in this study: bicycle-based recreation, camp-based recreation, paddle-based recreation, fishing, hunting, snow-based recreation, trail-based recreation, and wildlife viewing.

space as a smart growth strategy can save communities money. The study further cites:

- Parks and Open Space create a high quality of life that attracts tax-paying businesses and residents to communities.
- Open Space boosts local economies by attracting tourists and supporting outdoor recreation.
- Open Space conservation is often the cheapest way to safeguard drinking water, clean the air and achieve other environmental goals.

It is clear that the training and recreation activities, among the many other uses of the area surrounding the MEARNG training site and Mount Apatite Park, add value to Auburn's economy. For these reasons and others, the City of Auburn's opportunity to realize greater benefit may be improved by working with MEARNG to eliminate existing conflicts, investing in Mount Apatite Park as a valuable recreation resource and

collaborating with MEARNG to assure a long term compatible relationship between the two adjacent facilities.



Figure 1.9 winter fun at Mount Apatite Trails – photo by Adriann Tucker

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Chapter 2 – Public Process

The Auburn JLUS undertook a robust public involvement process. The process created ways in which information pertaining to the study could both be obtained and shared. The following avenues were pursued:

- Auburn Joint Land Use Study web and Facebook page
- Press Releases and new stories (TV, Newspapers)
- Establishment of a Policy Committee
- Development of a Study Fact Sheet
- Survey: Recreation Area Users
- Survey: Community Attitudes regarding MEARNG presence in Auburn
- Community Open House including Photo Contest, User Quiz
- Public Forum via a Joint meeting of City Council and Planning Board
- Open comment period from June 25, 2013 to July 26, 2013
- Formal Planning Board Hearing – May 2014
- Formal City Council Hearing – June 2014

The first task was to create a study web page hosted by the City. This webpage posted the purpose of the JLUS and the study area. It also included the schedule, agendas and minutes of the Policy Committee meetings as well as presentation materials and reports or memos developed by the Study Team. A study Facebook page was also created inviting interested parties to participate in the conversation about existing and potential future conflicts between the MEARNG training site in Auburn and the Mount Apatite Recreation Area and how they could be solved. The Facebook page also invited “friends” to post photos or sign

a guest book regarding their experiences in the study area.

Within the first several weeks of JLUS initiation, the Study Team worked with city staff to identify individuals and organizations that should be represented on a study Policy Committee. See member list on page i. Appointed by the Mayor of Auburn in late 2012, the Policy Committee included representatives of the Auburn City Council, the Auburn Recreation Advisory Committee, Taylor Pond Association, Andy Valley Sno Gypsies, the Auburn Suburban Little League, the Androscoggin Land Trust, area neighborhoods, as well as City and MEARNG staff.

The Policy Committee met monthly from December 2012 through August 2013 and twice in 2014 providing guidance to the Study Team regarding the study scope, the public involvement process, study schedule and final recommendations. For example, at their January meeting, the Policy Committee suggested that a user survey be devised in order to arrive at some sense of recreation area user demographics. A User Survey was developed and posted on the City’s study web page. It was promoted through the study Facebook page as well as through traditional city information sharing vehicles. Within a month of posting the survey, nearly 200 citizens responded to it. Highlights of the survey results demonstrate that while most visitors to Mount Apatite are from Auburn and Lewiston, Maine residents from as far away as Biddeford visit the site; the most common access point used is Mount Apatite Road and the most common use is for hiking and walking the dog. A fair number of people from nearby neighborhoods walk to the area. A more detailed discussion of the survey results is outlined in Chapter 4.

Along with receiving presentations from interest groups, the Policy Committee provided guidance on ways to organize, publicize and deliver the Open House scheduled for late May, 2013. See Figure 2.1.

In April, the Policy Committee began working with the information collected to date and actively participated in framing the preliminary recommendations which were then refined by the Study Team and Technical Committee. In late May 2013, members of the Policy Committee co-hosted the Open House with the Study Team and assisted with presentations. See Figure 2.2

- Figure 2.1 Organizations & Individuals Presenting at Policy Committee Meetings**
- Maine Army National Guard
 - Auburn Recreation Advisory Committee
 - Andy Valley Sno Gypsies
 - Taylor Pond Association
 - Auburn Suburban Little League
 - Androscoggin Land Trust
 - John Ackerman, LA
 - Frank Perham, Geologist
 - Woodrow Thompson, Maine State Geologist
 - Oxford County Gem & Mineral Club by letter

The Open House was advertised widely including notices on the study web and Facebook pages. The format for the Open House included several display tables where area organizations including those represented on the Policy Committee could highlight their efforts and preferences for solving conflicts.

In addition, several display tables were dedicated to highlighting preliminary study recommendations in narrative and graphic form. Within these stations, opportunities were provided for participants to express preferences. A short presentation was made by Mayor LaBonte and LTC Drummond, of the MEARNG, and attendees were invited to use

“post it” notes to provide comments. More than 50 citizens attended. Of those, most left comments with the Study Team or on map displays and flip charts. Some highlights of the feedback include: mixed feelings about obtaining or relocating the GRC; and if the GRC is transferred to the City, most of those who left comments were torn about the need to transfer land from the Park to the DoD.



Figure 2.2 Community members at Open House

The preliminary report and recommendations were published and posted on the City of Auburn’s JLUS website in late June 2013. On June 25, 2013, the Planning Board hosted a public forum to which the City Council was invited. This was the first formal opportunity for anyone interested in the study to respond to the draft recommendations outlined in this report.

The public forum was advertised through notices sent to all property owners in the study area, by email to those interested citizens whose emails were provided as part of the user survey and or by participation in the Open House. Following this forum, the preliminary plan was made available for public review and comment until July 26, 2013. Public comment was to be accepted in writing through regular mail, email or via the

study Facebook page; no comments were received.

In June 2013, the Policy Committee recommended a new survey to assess the community's attitudes toward MEARNG presence in Auburn. The MEARNG approved the survey and it was posted on the City's web page, advertised through Facebook and the press. Within two weeks, roughly 70 responses were logged. Its results are more thoroughly outlined in Chapter 4 and the survey questions are included in Appendix C.

At its July and August meetings, the Policy Committee discussed implications of comments to date on the JLUS from the Open House and attitude survey; and reviewed rough cost estimates for implementing the recommendations. In August 2013, the Technical and Policy Committees agreed to table further work on the JLUS at the request of the MEARNG in order to allow time for the ACOE to conduct a real estate appraisal on the GRC. The MEARNG's position was that without this information, a ranking of strategies could not occur. The MEARNG noted that the funding for this appraisal was tied to the 2014 federal budget which was later delayed several weeks by a government shutdown. In August, the City agreed to suspend efforts on the JLUS until 2014.

In January 2014, with ACOE work pending, the City chose to resume work on the JLUS. The Study Team refined the draft strategies and presented them to the Technical and Policy Committees in March.

Final edits to the JLUS were made and the document was refined for a final Policy Committee meeting scheduled for May 14, 2014. At that meeting the Committee was asked to adopt the JLUS recommendations

for submittal to the Planning Board and City Council for formal public hearings.

Those meetings were scheduled for June 10th and June 16th, 2014.

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