# TOWN OF BOWDOINHAM WATERFRONT PLAN

For Town Meeting Consideration on June 15, 2005

**Final Draft** 

#### Acknowledgments

The Committee wishes to acknowledge the generosity of Bud Curtis, who donated the two 5-acre parcels that we refer to here as our Eastern Waterfront. Similarly, we thank all those who served on and assisted the Sadadahoc Mill Planning and Development Committee, acquiring for the Town the 20+ acres around and upstream of Public Works. Their hard work and foresight allows us today to take another step towards a common vision of how this land should be used.

The Committee thanks also the many townspeople who attended meetings, completed surveys, raised questions, provided insight, and otherwise contributed to the formation and preparation of this Waterfront Plan.

In addition, the Chair thanks: Ellen Baum for her environmental and Planning Board perspective, David Rappoport and Chris Read for serving as thoughtful, community-minded neighbors of the waterfront, Steve Cox for his invaluable role as mapmaker and his dedication to the best interests of the town, Bill Giroux, for his important guidance, and not least, Kathy Durgin-Leighton, without whose foresight and dedication this committee would not have been formed.

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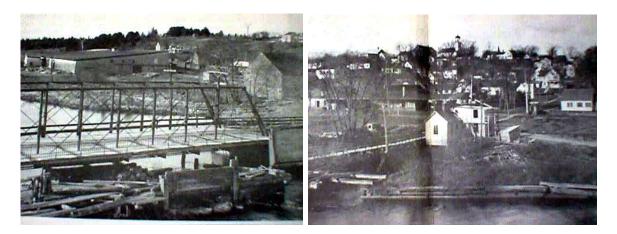
#### Summary

This Plan is intended to serve as a broad vision or outline guiding future stewardship and use of town-owned waterfront.

Noting that management of this land had been complicated by the lack of a clear framework, the Selectboard created the ad-hoc Waterfront Plan Committee in June 2004. The Committee met publicly twice a month from July 2004 to May 2005, and sought input through surveys, letters to abutters, consultations, articles, and meetings with other town committees and boards.

The resulting Plan designates three town waterfront areas: <u>Open Space, a</u> <u>Recreation Area, and Philip Mailly Park</u>. For each of these areas, the Plan provides a long-term vision, and a list of recommended and prohibited uses. Maps and aerial photos are provided to clarify current and proposed areas and their uses.

Future revisions to the Plan should be proposed by the Selectboard and approved by Town Meeting vote.



*Two pictures of a complete series depicting our Cathance River waterfront in 1912.* (*Bowdoinham Advertiser*, Vol. 2 #2, Frank Connors, Ed. http://www.link75.org/bhm/bhmhis/)

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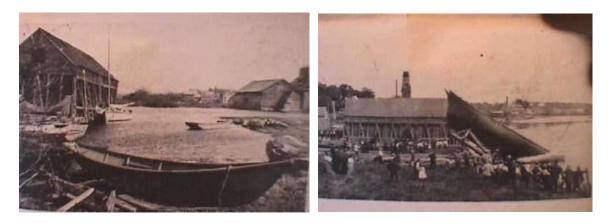
#### **Committee Purpose**

For the last several years, the town has owned over 30 acres of contiguous waterfront property. These lots include all those shown on the attached Future Vision map, and shown with red boundary lines on the aerial photograph (see also pp. 10 and 6). While we all know Mailly Park (formerly the Bowdoinham Waterfront Park) and Public Works to be town-owned, few are currently aware how far our common land extends along the Branch and the Cathance rivers.

In early June 2004, the Bowdoinham Selectboard established an ad-hoc committee to create a long-range vision for the waterfront area. The Committee, wrote the Board,

should seek to maximize and balance the recreational, natural, historic, educational, and economic value of this land, starting from the goals and strategies of our Comprehensive Plan. The committee's vision must consider also the financial constraints and rural character of the town, setting realistic... short-term goals as well as broader, long-term intentions.

In summary, the Committee's purpose was to create a vision for the entire waterfront, one which could be used to guide the use and development of this land.



Cathance Landing, two views. The first looks across the river to Brooklyn, and Kendall's fertilizer-plaster works. In the second, a ship is launched after being hauled several miles by oxen. (Bowdoinham Advertiser, July 1978, Frank Connors, Ed. http://www.link75.org/bhm/bhmhis/)

#### **Committee Process**

The Waterfront Planning committee was asked by the Selectboard to begin

...by investigating the historic, current and potential uses of the land in question, the overall topography of the land, relevant goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan, and public sentiment regarding a variety of potential uses.

In addition, the Committee was asked to establish clear short- and long-term goals and strategies; to create maps depicting implementation at various stages, and to consult with appropriate entities (including but not limited to townspeople, Planning Board, and Codes Enforcement Officer). The completed Plan was to be reviewed at a public hearing, and approved by Town Meeting in 2005.

Named to the Committee were:

- Ellen Baum, Planning Board member;
- Steve Cox, engineer and village resident;
- Kathy Durgin-Leighton, Recreation Director, Economic Development Officer, and village resident;
- David Steven Rappoport, village resident;
- Chris Read, village resident and Public Works area abutter; and
- Seth Berry, Selectperson.

The Committee began its work in July 2004, and generally met twice a month through May 2005. Meetings were attended and the process assisted by a variety of additional townspeople, including but not limited to:

Kim & Ray Benjamin	Tom & Shirley Parker
Steve & Carol Thomas	Phil Pelletier
Clifford Mortimer	Sarah Stapler
Elaine & Terry Graviett	<ul> <li>Jason &amp; Justin McKim</li> </ul>
Les Verill	Dylan Fish
James McGee	Corey Garver
Steve Ciembroniewicz	Steve McKim
Alden Blease	David Berry
Jennifer Leech	Zeke Adams
• Dwight & Heather Blease	Katie McPherson
• Susan Redmond, Department of	Jessica Adams
Environmental Protection	Adam Walter
Joanne Joy	Ryan Connors
Calvin & Jewel Temple	Ed Friedman
Lynne Sanford	Kate Tyrol
David Joseph	Heather Jackson
Kathy Fritz	Brad Foley
Kurt & Joanne Reinhart	Town Manager Bill Giroux
Alice Pollis	<ul> <li>Jen Foley, Selectperson</li> </ul>
Lucinda Sinclair	Wayne Dorr, Selectperson

Three site walks were undertaken by committee members to familiarize themselves with the terrain and its current and historic uses. Notes from the Sagadahoc Mill Planning and Development Committee were reviewed and a 1996 survey of this parcel (area around Public Works) obtained. Current zoning, floodplain delineations, and boundaries were reviewed.

Potential uses of the land were brainstormed, and a survey created to gauge public opinion. Along with the survey, an article was written for the October <u>Bowdoinham</u> <u>News</u> to generate interest and encourage involvement. A direct mailing also went out to abutters of the town waterfront in mid-October, extending a special invitation to attend committee meetings. Maps, prepared by Steve Cox, allowed the committee to see the area and to think more clearly about its potential uses.

As the plan took shape, consultations were held with members of the Planning Board and with the Biking/Walking/Paddling Committee. Important environmental and regulatory perspectives were provided, respectively, by Ed Friedman of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, and by Susan Redmond of the DEP.

All meetings were advertised in the <u>Times Record</u> and official minutes were posted to the town website, <u>www.bowdoinham.com</u>. A hearing before the Selectboard was also held on May 11 to provide an additional chance for public feedback on the Plan before Town Meeting.

On March 25, 1805, an act was passed by the Massachusetts Legislature incorporating Zacheus Beals, Josiah Colby, James Fulton, Elihu Getchell, Robert, David and William Patten, Thomas Teed, Joseph Sprague, and James Sampson as "proprietors of Cathance Bridge," to erect a bridge over Cathance River at the termination of the road laid out by Topsham to the landing at Bowdoinham, said bridge to be 12 feet high above high water across the channel.

The tolls authorized were:

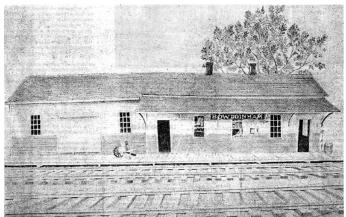
٠	Foot passengers (each)	2 cents
٠	Horse and rider	6 cents
٠	Two-wheel carriage for pleasure	10 cents
٠	Four-wheel carriage with more than two horses,	4 cents
	for each horse	6 cents
٠	Sleigh or sled drawn by a beast	8 cents
٠	Sleigh or sled drawn by 2 beasts	2 cents
٠	Sleigh or sled drawn by more than 2, for each	1 cent
	beast	free
٠	Sheep or swine, each	
•	One driver and team with each drove	

(Bowdoinham Advertiser, Vol II, No. 1, Frank Connors, Ed,. http://www.link75.org/bhm/bhmhis/)

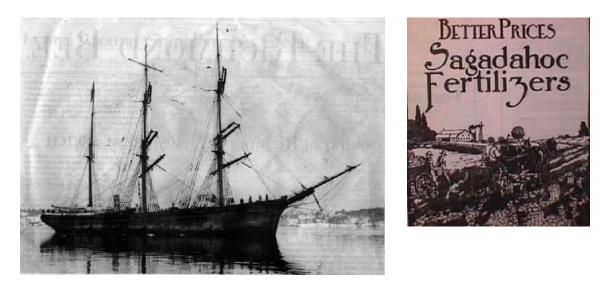
## **Committee Findings**

### **Images of Our History**

As our historical society members know, the history of Bowdoinham's waterfront is too rich and varied, too central to our identity, to do justice in this space. To whet your interest, here are just a few examples of what is now available on the web, thanks to the outstanding efforts of Frank Connors and Lance Libby, at <u>www.link75.org/bhm/bhmhis</u>.



Bowdoinham's first railroad station was built at Cathance Landing in 1850. (This drawing made by Sarah Ann Stapler from several old photographs.)



Built in 1877, the Bark SEA KING (above right) was the largest vessel ever built in Bowdoinham. This picture was taken about 1910. (B'ham Historical Society Collection)

The Sagadahoc Fertilizer Co., was established in 1880 by the Kendall brothers. The first batch of Dirigo fertilizer was mixed in a tin pail, and stirred with an iron spoon.

### Aerial Photograph

At present, our waterfront land extends from the lower left to the upper right corner of this photo, along the north and west sides of the Cathance and the Branch. Color reproductions of this document will show the boundaries drawn in red. If looking at a black-and-white copy, please refer to the Future Vision Map for a sense of boundaries.



Viewers will note that except for the area around Public Works and Mailly Park (boat launch area), the land is at present undeveloped and under Resource Protection status. Roughly <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of the 10 acres to the east of Route 24 is scrubby wetland and/or below the 100-year flood limit. The western parcel, 20.1 acres, is slightly higher and drier, with 10.3 acres above the flood limit.

FIRST FISH - Bowdoinham Advertiser, May 1, 1885

Amasa Williams caught and brought into the market his first alewives of the season last Saturday. He also brought in the first of the season shad last week, and a 12 pound Bass.

### **Current Use Map**

Since activity on town waterfront focuses near Route 24, this map does not show the full extent of our land. To read the legend more easily and see a larger reproduction of this image, please refer to the Current Use map at the back of this document.



A language note: while this image labels the area actively used by Public Works as "Public Works Area," other references in this Plan to "the area around Public Works" tend to indicate the larger area, zoned as Limited Commercial, which our Future Vision Map proposes as the Recreation Area.

# **Survey Results**

In the Fall 2004 issue of <u>Bowdoinham News</u>, the Committee published an article describing its mandate and requesting the input of residents on a survey (see appendix). A map of the areas in question was provided, and respondents were asked to indicate their top five preferred uses. Space was also provided to write in suggestions.

In all, 72 surveys were received by the Committee. The tabulated results are provided on the next page. Potential uses are ranked by the number of respondents who indicated them as a top-five choice.

Trails	45	
Picnic Area	40	
Community Garden	33	
Canoe/Ice Access	32	
Ice Skating Rink	30	
Skateboard Park	27	
Train Stop	24	
Do nothing/open space	23	
Rec. Center	15	
Volleyball Courts	9	
Hunting/Fishing	9	Fishing only: 4*
Rental Space	9	
Educational Classes	7	
Snack shack	6	
Canoe tours	6	
Public Works	6	
Parking	6	
Sign/Info Center	4	
Sell For Revenue	3	
Storm water treatment	3	
Roller Hockey	1	
Swim	1*	
	0	

These results indicate a strong preference for recreational uses, particularly walking, picnicking, gardening, paddling, skating, and/or skateboarding. While there was clear support for building recreational structures (Rink, Skateboard Park, Rec. Center, etc) there was also a desire to set aside land as undisturbed Open Space. The Committee noted little support for selling the land, or for using it for Public Works -- both uses which may someday conflict with the more popular goals of recreation and preservation.

From Kennebec Yesterdays by Dr. Ernest Marriner, in the Bowdoinham Advertiser.

On the Kennebec, "at Bowdoinham a day's work was hard and long. In 1825, ... Bowdoinham's Ship yards were doing good business and paying wages in cash. At Bowdoinham the shipyard took on new hands at 75 cents a day, and the day was from sunrise to sunset. After a year the worker got a dollar per day, and after two years he received \$1.25, and that was the maximum. In the summer the men were called before sunrise and worked an hour before breakfast. At ten o'clock they had a lunch of bread and rum. For dinner at noon they took only half an hour. At four in the afternoon came another short break for bread and rum. The laborers quit work at sunset, had supper about eight P.M. and went straight to bed. That was the routine for a six day week. No wonder they called Sunday a day of rest. "

#### Goals of the Comprehensive Plan

The 2000 Town of Bowdoinham Comprehensive Plan puts a premium on open space, recreational areas, historic preservation, and economic development. These values were also at the core of the Waterfront Plan committee process.

Key goals of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan informing the work of the Waterfront Plan Committee include:

Land Use, Goal One: To Protect the Natural Resources Valued by the Community (p.138).

Land Use, Goal Two: To Protect the Traditional Village, the Heart of the Community, while Enhancing and Encouraging its Economic Vitality (p. 138). The economic vitality and the attractiveness and liveability of the village area are inextricably linked.

History, Goal One: To Honor and Preserve Bowdoinham's Archaeological and Historical Heritage (p. 38). This section points out that 5,000 year-old artifacts have been found along the Cathance and its Branch, and calls for concerted historic preservation, mapping, and education efforts.

Natural Resources, Goal One: To Protect Water Quality, Scenic Vistas and Wildlife Habitat (p.73). This section advocates the protection of existing wetlands for a wide variety of compelling reasons. Among these is the potential for increased, wetlands-related recreation and education (p. 61).

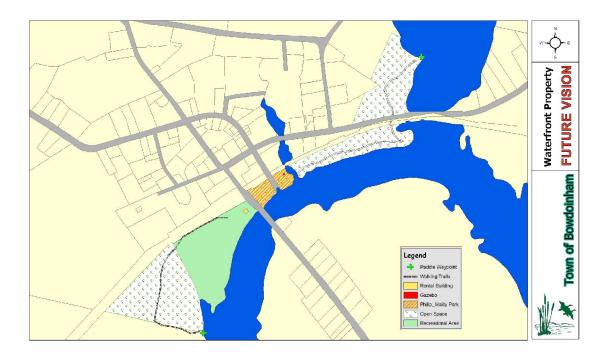
<u>Recreation, Goal One: Assure That All Ages and Sexes Have Equal</u> <u>Opportunities and Access to Recreation in Bowdoinham (p. 82).</u> Increasing the variety of recreational opportunities helps ensure there is something for everyone.

Recreation, Goal Two: Expand the Recreational Trail Opportunities (p. 82) This section discusses not only walking trails, but also biking, skating, and similar non-motorized, recreational opportunities, as well as the desire for additional public access to the water (pp. 77-84).

Each of these objectives is a integral element of the Waterfront Plan. By dedicating approximately 22.5 acres to Open Space and 7.5 acres to intensive recreational use for all segments of the population, the Plan is a positive step toward our shared, comprehensive goals.

# The Waterfront Plan

The town-owned waterfront is divided into three areas for the purpose of this Plan. As labeled on the "Future Vision" map below, these are the <u>Philip Mailly Park, the</u> <u>Recreation Area, and Open Space</u>. To read the legend more easily and see a larger reproduction of this image, please refer to the Future Vision map at the back of this document.



In the following sections of this plan, each area is described in greater detail. A vision is set forth for each area, and specific uses are listed as permitted or not permitted. By adopting this Plan, the Town agrees to adhere both in letter and spirit to these general visions and specified uses.

**Philip Mailly Park** 



Courtesy of Bryce Muir, www.brycemuir.com

### Description

Formerly known as the Bowdoinham Waterfront Park, this small but important area is bounded by Sampson's Creek, the railroad, the Cathance, and Route 24. The area was largely redefined in the 1990s, thanks to the efforts of Philip Mailly, the Waterfront Committee, and others. In June 2004, the Town voted to rename the park in honor of Phil.

Today, Mailly Park is the area where the Town gazebo, docks, and boat launch are currently located. The area is used for Celebrate Bowdoinham, summer concerts, picnicking, boating, and parking. Until recently, the Park was also the site of our Farmers' Market. As part of our agreement with federal and state entities who assisted with the recent renovations of the boat launch, Mailly Park must remain a free, 24-hour access point for trailered boats.

# Vision for Mailly Park

Mailly Park should be used by the Town to enhance recreational, historic and educational activities and opportunities for all segments of the Town population, complementing the Waterfront Recreation Area and the Recreation Fields near the school. Mailly Park should also remain the primary parking area and a free, 24-hour access point for trailered boats.

### Recommended Uses of Mailly Park

- Celebrate Bowdoinham
- performance arts
- Farmers' Market/local crafts market
- public boat launch
- public parking
- picnicking
- stone memorial bench with plaque
- additional plantings
- removal of invasive, exotic plants
- information kiosk with fundraising plaque, trail maps (see below)



A kiosk with recreational, cultural, and historic information. Drawing by Karen Read.

# Prohibited Uses of Mailly Park

- commercial use except as approved by Selectboard
- rental/lease space except as approved by Selectboard
- sale for profit
- all signs, except those approved by both Recreation Director and Town Manager as necessary, durable, modest, and minimal in number
- gatherings over 50 with advance permission from Recreation Director
- gatherings over 400 with advance Selectboard permission

### **Recreation Area**

#### Description

As seen in the aerial image below and on the "Future Vision" map, the Recreation Area is to be the 7.5 or so acres surrounding Public Works and the yellow cape. More precisely, we refer to the parcel zoned as Limited Commercial/General Development on the most recent, official Land Use and Shoreland Zoning map at Town Office. For years, this land was used for fertilizer manufacture and for freight and passenger rail service. Before the land was purchased in the late '90s by the Town, a Class I environmental assessment was conducted. No contaminants were found in that assessment.



Several factors make this the best area to devote to recreational use. First, the area is zoned as Limited Commercial/General Development rather than Resource Protection. Second, according to the 1996 Survey by Harty Land Surveying, over half of the area is above the 100-year floodplain. Finally, the land is visible, centrally located, easily accessible from Route 24, and offers good river access for nontrailered boats or wintertime skaters.

## Vision for Recreation Area

The Waterfront Recreation Area should be used by the Town to enhance recreational, historic and educational activities and opportunities for all segments of the Town population, complementing what is already available at Mailly Park and the Recreation Fields near the school.

### Recommended Uses of Recreation Area

- recreation and related structures
- *historic preservation and related structures*
- education and related structures

#### Such as:

- ice/river access
- Celebrate Bowdoinham activities
- overflow parking
- canoe/kayak put-in
- picnic area/barbeque pit
- horseshoe pit
- historical society meeting house
- well-landscaped community gardens
- public kayak/canoe shed
- beach volleyball court
- other long-range recreational uses at discretion of Selectboard

#### Prohibited Uses of Recreation Area

- commercial use except as approved by Selectboard
- rental/lease space except as approved by Selectboard
- sale for profit
- all signs, except those approved by the both Recreation Director and Town Manager as necessary, durable, modest, and minimal in number.
- gatherings over 50 with advance permission from Recreation Director
- gatherings over 400 with advance Selectboard permission

#### Additional Recommendations

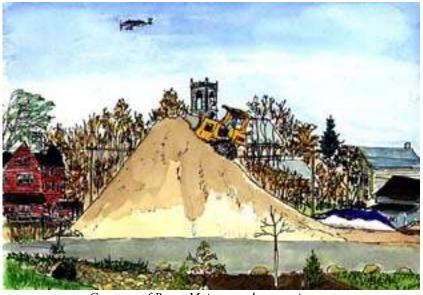
Public Works:

Though indispensable and much appreciated, Public Works is not well located. Some residents complain that it is an eyesore; others express concern about the culvert pile or the adequacy of the current salt shed; still others feel the land is better suited to recreational uses.

In the short term, the Town should review operations and where possible, take steps to improve appearance and environmental safety. In the long term, the Town should consider moving the Public Works operation to an alternate location, perhaps near the interstate. Payments on the current fire station are expected to be completed by 2008, after which time the Town may be in a position to consider buying land and building or renovating a suitable building.

#### Yellow Cape:

For now, the Town should keep part of this building as rented office space. Given the number of police calls to the waterfront area, the Town is also well-advised to maintain a substation office here for the Sadagahoc sheriff. In the long term, however, the building may not be well located or well suited to Town needs. A future Selectboard may need to consider relocating, renovating, and/or selling the building to be moved off-site.



Courtesy of Bryce Muir, www.brycemuir.com

### **Open Space**

## Description

The land designated by this Plan as Open Space includes both a western and an eastern section. Both areas are currently in Resource Protection and are best suited to natural preservation, historic and environmental education, and low-impact use such as picnicking.



The western Open Space consists of the 12.6 acres upstream of the Recreation Area, including forest, field and wetland. Thanks to recent efforts by our Biking, Walking, Paddling Group and others, a walking trail now extends along the right-of-way past Public Works and on to the upstream end of the Town parcel. The trail end affords reasonable water access and a pleasant downstream view. Ticks and other wildlife are found here in abundance.

The eastern Open Space consists of two 5-acre lots, donated to the Town by Bud Curtis. Except along the railroad track, the land is largely wet and impassable. Two dry spots are the small point at which the Branch meets the Cathance, and a much larger, higher upstream point on the Branch, where shipbuilding once took place and where evidence of brick manufacture can still be seen. Current abutters to this property include the Blease and Mayo families. The Mayo land, protected by a conservation easement, extends north up the Branch to the first culvert under Ridge Road. Eagles and a beaver are often seen along these shores.

# Vision for Open Space

Waterfront Open Space should remain relatively untouched. As possible, minimal improvements should be made to allow access to walkers and/or paddlers, and to share knowledge of local history and ecology.

### Recommended Uses of Open Space

- *trails and associated structures (bridge, boardwalk etc.)*
- paddle waypoints and picnic tables
- maintainance of wildland and wildlife habitat
- *mowing/bush-hogging where appropriate*
- *interpretive signs (historic/ecological; see Prohibited Uses for guidelines)*

### Prohibited Uses of Open Space

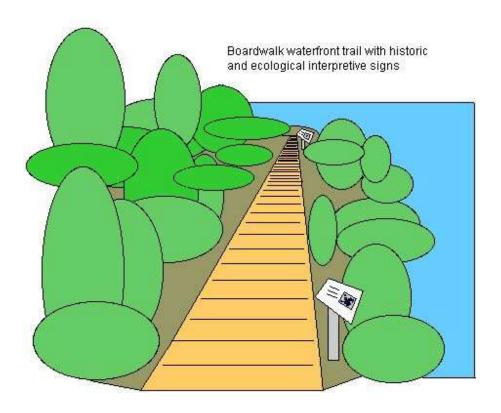
- hunting
- motorized vehicular traffic, except with town permission or right-of-way
- permanent structures other than bridges or boardwalks
- camping
- *camp fires/fire pits*
- all signs, except those approved by both Recreation Director and Town Manager as necessary, durable, modest, and minimal in number
- gatherings over 50 with advance permission from Recreation Director
- gatherings over 400 with advance Selectboard permission

#### Additional Recommendations:

Boardwalk Trail:

In the long run, the Town might consider building a boardwalk trail to cross the Eastern Open Space. For the time being, those wishing to access the Eastern parcels can do so by water, or along the road and/or railroad track.

Long-term, the idea is intriguing as a way of opening up a longer pedestrian loop that could provide residents and school children a firsthand glimpse of Bowdoinham history and ecology. For example, a longer trail might extend further up the Branch along the Mayo easement, crossing Ridge Road onto school or town property, and returning the walker to the village along Center Street. Interpretive signs and/or a trails map (see Mailly Park kiosk suggestion) could include photos of how specific spots looked at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Paddling Trails:

Paddling Trails are a series of interconnected waypoints, accessible and attractive spots for canoes, kayaks, or other small craft. They can help to encourage a healthy, light-impact activity for all ages, and may also help to provide impetus to protect adjacent land and wildlife habitat from development.

The Paddle Waypoints shown on the Open Space map are intended as two points on a larger, regional paddling trail that is yet to be defined. Over time, such a trail could be mapped as a set of landowner-sanctioned, clearly-defined put-ins, picnicking spots, and so on. Rules for each site (day use only, carry-in/carry-out, etc.) would be required and enforcement difficult. State-run/state-owned properties such as Swan Island and the Wildes Road and Abbagadassett River preserves might be included, along with privately held shoreland in the greater Merrymeeting Bay area.

### **Required Permits**

As a rule, approvals and permits that would be required of a private landowner must also be obtained by the Town or by the responsible committee or group. This includes permits from the Town Planning Board and/or Codes Enforcement Officer as well as relevant state and federal regulatory agencies.

Currently, structures within 75 feet of high water (or within wetland outside of 75 feet from water) must go through a Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) permitting process before being constructed. Details on this process are available from the State Department of Environmental Protection. Structures requiring permits may include anything that may significantly disturb the soil, such as:

- footbridge
- boardwalk
- kiosk
- trail
- skateboard park/ball courts
- signage



Cathance Branch, or West Branch, as viewed from Clay Hill, about 1915. Bowdoinham's "steam sawmill" on the left, the mill's horse barn on the right. (March '84 <u>Advertiser</u>, <u>http://www.link75.org/bhm/bhmhis/</u>)

#### Resources

Bowdoinham is fortunate to have a number of organizations, groups and committees already organized to promote recreational, environmental and cultural activities in the public interest. By defining our collective vision for the town waterfront, the Town makes it easier for such groups to take action.

Since collaborations are often able to accomplish more and draw more funding, we offer here only a partial list of of some potentially influential groups in the area.

- Bowdoinham Historical Society
- Bowdoinham Community School
- Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (<u>www.link75.org/mmb</u>)
- Cathance River Education Alliance (<u>www.creamaine.org</u>)
- Bowdoinham Recreation Department
- Bowdoinham Biking/Walking/Paddling Group

A guide to grants at the state level is available at <u>www.mdf.org/downtown/guide</u>.



Courtesy of Bryce Muir, www.brycemuir.com

#### **Revisions to Plan**

Revisions to the Plan may be approved at any time by a majority of residents at Town Meeting.

