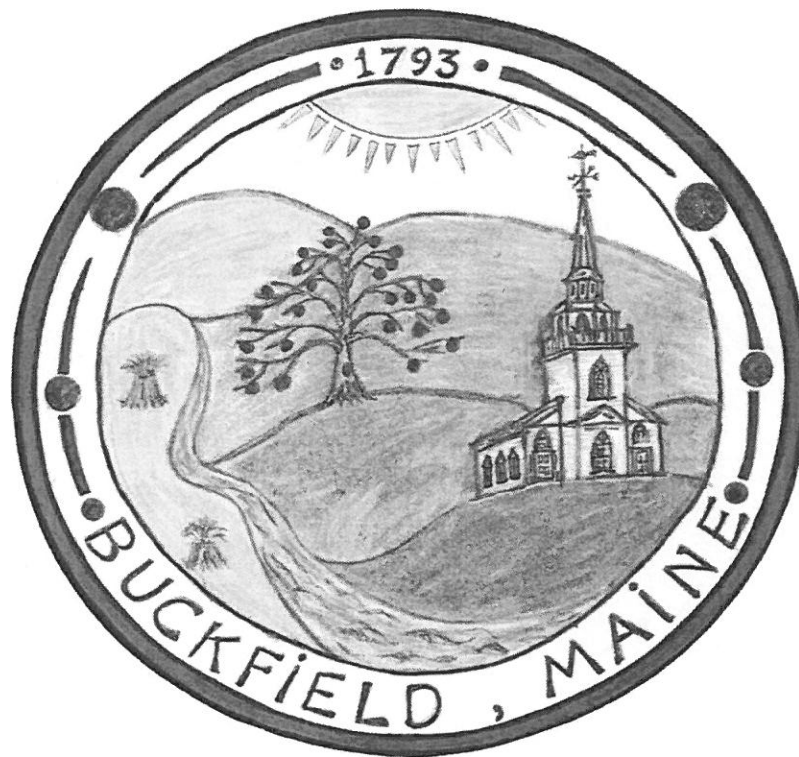


BUCKFIELD, MAINE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Adopted Version
November 2006

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Section I

Policies and Implementation Strategies
Future Land Use Plan
Regional Coordination Program
Capital Investment Plan

Adopted Version
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Introduction

If the people of Buckfield look at our past we can find an agriculturally based community evolving over two centuries from near self-sufficiency to a rural community on the edge of an urban corridor. Our automobiles and our electronic communication systems now connect us to the world in a degree unimaginable fifty years ago, and our community culture has changed greatly in just the last decade or two.

But Buckfield is not yet just a bedroom to Lewiston-Auburn and beyond. Our topography and our resource-based economy have cushioned our entry into the twenty-first century. We should feel very lucky to still have a real village center with mills, stores, and services providing employment and commitment to a strong town. In our relationships with these businesses and the people who work in them we maintain the sense of interdependency which is so essential to a healthy community. Of equal importance to the town's identity are the custodians of our farmland and forest, who continue to provide us with a significant agricultural economy and the preservation of natural resources, which are indispensable to our health and well being.

It is our small town atmosphere and our rural and natural landscape that citizen surveys have valued most highly, and it is the strengthening of our economy and the protection of our natural resources which will preserve those most valued elements of Buckfield. The policies and strategies set forth in this Comprehensive Plan are focused around building on these key elements of our identity.

In this section of the plan goals and policies of the town are to be set into action by strategies to be carried out by the town or local or regional organizations. Each strategy identifies who would be responsible for taking action and in what time frame. A short time frame is within two years from plan adoption, mid time frame is within five years and long is within 10 years. It is almost literally correct to say that this plan for action has been mapped out. The Land Use Map, which is the visual culmination the assessment of our natural and man made resources and vulnerabilities, reflects what is found in the array of special maps found in Section II. There is a whole web of reasons why Buckfield's Growth Area is so limited, and the easiest way to understand them is to study those maps.

The Land Use Map is not a zoning map. It simply shows the areas of the town where we want most growth to occur. Growth is to be guided toward those areas with the least slopes, acceptable soils and the most developed or least costly potential infrastructure. Growth is to be most limited around the most fragile, vulnerable or valuable natural resources.

The plan often refers to a "Land Use Code;" this might mean zoning or it might mean developing ordinances to assess and regulate various uses of land anywhere in town. Site review for new uses to judge and control impact upon neighbors and environment is one example of this kind of land use regulation. Rather than risk becoming bogged down in arguing over the strength and

weaknesses of zoning versus other controls over use, we are setting forth here a plan for positive education and ongoing action to strengthen and protect our most valuable assets.

This plan cannot address all possible future needs and dilemmas nor deal in detail with emerging problems. However, the plan may be amended at any time the town sees need. We see this as the beginning to a continuous process involving as many groups and individuals within the community as possible. Through this ongoing process we hope to maintain a community to which both our children and others will be attracted as a wonderful place in which to live and work.

PLANNING TOPIC

Historical and Archeological Resources

Town Goal: To identify and preserve historic and archeological resources.

Introduction

Buckfield's village residential architecture is dominated by 19th century styles ranging from early center-chimney capes to large colonial revival homes. In the last two decades homeowners have been showing their appreciation for these residences. On High Street, Morrill Street, and Turner Street many homes have been rescued from deterioration.

Continuing use of 19th century commercial buildings and commercial expansion into residential units has allowed Buckfield to maintain a much busier village center than is often found in small towns in the region. Northeast Bank's continuing commitment to its prominent historic building, Buckfield Inn's use of a fine 1870's home, and Oddfellow Theater's reuse of a former fraternal building all contribute to a vital village.

Clearly businesses and services benefit from an attractive historic village environment, and townspeople remark positively on improved maintenance of historic buildings, including those owned by the Town. There are other, more subtle, historic remains which receive the notice of many in town and deserve attention in planning. These include cemeteries, stone fences, walls, and old foundations. In lesser numbers dams, bridges, stone quarries, and mines are scattered through our town.

Based on the results of the Inventory and analysis and local information, these are the concerns the plan needs to address.

Potential archeological sites are not protected.

Buckfield contains several historically significant structures. Only two, the Union Church and the Zadoc Long Free Library are listed with the National Register of Historic Places, which offers limited protection.

Changes to the Town's historically significant structures or adjacent activities may reduce those structures historic values.

Buckfield contains neighborhoods that are unique in rural Maine architecture. Inappropriate development or redevelopment may reduce their significance.

Policies

Identify, protect, and preserve those buildings or groups of buildings that possess unique architectural characteristics of historical importance and/or possess historical importance.

Before development takes place in areas with known archeological resources, their values are assessed.

Strategies:

Appoint a Historic Preservation Commission, whose mission will be to build and maintain awareness of the importance of our historic resources and to work with other town committees and officials to identify and protect historic structures and sites.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectmen/Short

Map historic structures and sites throughout the town using GPS technology, if possible. Sites should be photographed and described for a permanent Town record. Existing historic records should be copied for these files.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Historic Preservation Commission/Ongoing

Include historic structures and sites in ordinances and regulations as valuable resources to be protected from unnecessary disturbance.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Ongoing

Consider the establishment of a historic conservation fund to ensure historically compatible maintenance of Town owned buildings and perhaps to encourage historic preservation of private structures.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectmen/Short

Design and build ditching which does not lead to the destruction of existing stone walls or fences.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectman and Road Committee/Ongoing

Develop ordinance standards for subdivisions and non residential development projects that require the identification and protection of known or potential archaeological resource locations as determined by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

PLANNING TOPIC

Housing and Affordable Housing

Town Goal: To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Buckfield citizens.

Introduction

Over the past twenty years, in Buckfield, as in much of the rest of Maine, new residential construction has generally taken place along existing roads, including arterial roads – often in formerly rural areas. This growth pattern, often called “strip development,” along with factors such as an increased number of residents who commute to work, has tended to diminish the traditional sense of community within towns, as homes are often isolated and separated by heavily trafficked roads. In recent years, the Planning Board has developed regulations and policies designed to encourage the building of living communities away from main roads, with sidewalks and areas for children to play, and community members to come together.

Housing affordability is very important to the survival of the community. When housing costs make it impossible for young people to stay and raise their families in the same community where they were raised, the result is separation of the generations of a family, as well as economic segregation and a general aging of the population. There has been a dramatic rise in housing prices in Buckfield over the past two or three years, due to several factors: an increase in the value of land, an increase in the cost of building materials, and an increased demand for housing from labor markets outside the community, primarily in Lewiston and Auburn. As prices have increased, the affordability for home ownership has dropped - from 98% in 2000 to 66% in 2005 for a family making 80% of median income. For families making 50% of median income, affordability dropped from 60% to 40% in the same period, as increases in income have failed to keep pace with rising home prices. The Maine State Housing Authority estimated affordability of rental housing in Buckfield is slightly better. A family making 50% of median income can afford 90% of the median-priced two-bedroom rental unit in Buckfield, but families making 30% or less can afford only 54% of the cost of such an apartment. There is currently a need in Buckfield for at least 21 more subsidized rental housing units, according to MSHA estimates.

All new construction and renovation is expected to comply with state electrical and plumbing codes. A State Building Code has been adopted but it is only effective if adopted by an individual community. Towns with a population of 2,000 or more are required to appoint an inspector of buildings. The person is required to inspect each new building during construction to see that all proper safeguards against the catching and spreading of fire are used. Buckfield's population could well reach 2000 by the next census year (2010).

Within the past two years, Buckfield has amended its subdivision regulations to allow for more flexible siting of houses in order to take advantage of solar energy and wind protection. With rising energy costs, energy efficiency will be a major factor in reducing housing costs.

Based on the Results of the Inventory and Analysis and local information, these are concerns the plan needs to address.

Encouraging the concept of neighborhoods.

Encouraging the creation of more affordable housing

Encouraging safe, well-constructed homes.

Encouraging environmentally responsible and energy efficient housing.

Policies

Encourage the building of safe and well-constructed housing by planning for the timely adoption of a local building code and the hiring of a building inspector as the Town's population nears the 2000 mark.

Increase energy-efficient housing in Buckfield by encouraging developers to build well-insulated houses and to take advantage of solar energy, windbreak protection, and summer shade in the siting of houses, and in landscaping practices.

Encourage the building of communities away from main roads – in order to reduce noise and traffic, and give children safe neighborhoods and play areas. This has already been mandated to some extent by prohibiting more than one curb cut for any subdivision of fewer than five lots or more than two curb cuts for subdivisions of five to fifteen lots.

Encourage clustering of housing and homes facing one another within subdivisions, in order to create a sense of community, and create open space for walking trails, playgrounds, and community recreational activities.

Encourage the development of housing near the current village, in order to increase the sense of community within the town, promote local business, and give easier access to village businesses and services.

Encourage the building of sidewalks in the village area and within subdivisions – in order to further create a sense of community within neighborhoods.

Seek to make 10% of all new residential housing meet affordable housing guidelines.

Encourage and provide opportunities for affordable housing through creation of accessory apartments, rental housing including multi-family dwellings, and cluster/open space development.

Encourage affordable housing within all subdivisions by 1) mandating that a certain percentage of houses within each subdivision be affordable, and 2) by providing incentives to subdividers, such as waivers for smaller lot sizes for affordable houses.

Allow owner-built homes, and encourage them by allowing the placement of a non-permanent dwelling, for limited duration, on a lot during the period that a permanent dwelling is constructed on the same lot.

Allow mobile and manufactured homes on individual lots in all locations where traditional single family homes are permitted.

Allow mobile home park development in areas where such densities are environmentally suited and municipal services, including fire, roads and schools, are available.

Encourage the development of housing which is energy efficient, and easy to maintain, through education, and through mandating in the subdivision process.

Work with subdividers to encourage the integration into subdivisions of affordable housing that is attractive, low-maintenance, and energy-efficient.

Work closely with non-profit groups such as Community Concepts to build communities of quality, affordable, energy-efficient, mixed-income housing for first-time owners, low-income families, and older residents who wish to downsize.

Strategies

Apply for a grant to inventory and study the availability of rental housing, including affordable rental housing, within Buckfield.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board and Town Manager/Short

Develop a dialogue and close working relationship with Community Concepts, to develop a coordinated plan that assures the availability of attractive, well-constructed, and energy-efficient affordable housing within Buckfield.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

Amend the Municipal Building Permit Ordinance to specifically allow for accessory apartments within single family dwellings not subject to the current 60,000 sq. foot requirement for conversions of accessory buildings to secondary dwellings.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

Amend the Subdivision Regulations to require that 10% of lots in every new subdivision be allocated for affordable housing. The Regulations should provide for waivers of current minimum lot size for these lots.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

Bring before the Town meeting a proposal to adopt the State Building Code.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectmen/Short

Bring before the Town meeting a warrant article authorizing the appointment of a Town Building Inspector.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectmen/Short

PLANNING TOPIC

Economy

Town Goal: To provide incentives for economic development consistent with the town's rural character and its fiscal and infrastructure resources and to support existing businesses located in Buckfield.

Introduction

The existing town government currently does not include any group specifically charged with monitoring the economic status of the community. We feel that the new Town Manager can be used to support local businesses. We also believe that this staff position will be more successful with this charge if the town adds an Economic Development Committee as a standing committee within the town governance structure. This group could be charged with advising the Selectmen, Town Manager, and Planning Board regarding economic issues and the economic impact of other decisions made within our town government.

We also believe that an Economic Development Committee could work collaboratively with the Town Manager to educate residents on the products and services available locally and the benefits of “buying local”. This could be accomplished in part by maintaining the inventory of businesses in town (see above) and notifying the Economic Development Committee of new businesses as they open.

This group can also help by reviewing any zoning proposals resulting from the comprehensive planning process to determine their impact on existing businesses and advising the Planning Board accordingly.

The Oxford Hills Chamber of Commerce voted in June 2005 to enlarge its service area to include the town of Buckfield. Local businesses are being encouraged to participate in the Chamber. The town website could be augmented to include links to local businesses who wish to be included there.

In January of 2005 the Planning Board held two public meetings to ask townspeople what their concerns and interests were regarding the comprehensive plan. At both sessions attendees identified the desire to encourage the development of businesses which support, perpetuate, and celebrate Buckfield’s rural character and natural beauty. We are not entirely sure of the best ways that the town can do this, but we agree that this should be an integral part of the overall economic plan for the community. If there were an Economic Development Committee, that group might work with the Town Manager to research grants that could support such ‘rural-friendly’ business development.

It has also been noted that technology-based businesses are desirable for several reasons. First, they are generally high-paying. Second, they require an educated workforce. Third, they are generally non-polluting. Fourth, they can be located almost anywhere with adequate power and internet access. We believe that our town should seek to attract these types of businesses and that doing so may help provide jobs for our youth.

Many have noted for years that our youth often feel they must relocate in order to earn a living. We believe that our community will be strengthened if we can identify and eliminate the barriers that compel our young people to move away when they are ready to enter the workforce. This is another area where an Economic Development Committee might be of assistance. Working with the Town Manager, school Guidance Counselor, and local businesses, attention can be brought to this issue with opportunities to reverse the out-migration of youth that we have experienced for years.

In conclusion, if Buckfield is to provide incentives for economic development consistent with the town’s rural character and its fiscal and infrastructure resources and support existing businesses located here, we believe that these issues need to be at the top of someone’s agenda and/or job description.

Based on the results of the Inventory and Analysis and local information, these are the concerns that the plan needs to address.

The existing town government currently does not include any group specifically charged with monitoring the economic status of the community.

There is the desire to encourage the development of businesses which support, perpetuate, and celebrate Buckfield's rural character and natural beauty.

Many have noted for years that our youth often feel they must relocate in order to earn a living.

Policies

Encourage and support the continuation of the current businesses located in Buckfield.

Promote growth within existing businesses located in Buckfield.

Encourage development of businesses which support, perpetuate, and celebrate our rural character and natural beauty.

Encourage development of technology-based businesses.

Identify and eliminate barriers which compel our youth to move away in order to earn a living.

Strategies

Create an Economic Development Committee as a standing committee within the town government and charge this group with advising the Selectmen and Town Manager regarding economic issues within the town.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectmen & voters at Town Meeting/Short

Educate residents on the products and services available locally and the benefits of "buying local".

Responsibility/Time Frame: Economic Development Committee/Ongoing

Maintain the inventory of businesses in town and notify Economic Development Committee of new businesses as they open.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Town Clerk & Manager/ Ongoing; semi-annually in April and October

Any zoning resulting from the comprehensive planning process supports existing businesses and encourages development of businesses consistent with the fiscal and infrastructure resources of the town.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board & Economic Development Committee/ Ongoing

Create links on the town's website to town businesses which select to be listed there.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Town Manager/Ongoing updated each October and April

Add a page to the town's website for local businesses to post job openings

Responsibility/Time Frame: Town Manager/Ongoing- updated monthly

Use the town's website to describe the town's unique natural features to seek to attract such businesses

Responsibility/Time Frame: Economic Development Committee & Town Manager/Ongoing

Establish economic incentives for these types of projects

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board & Board of Selectmen/Short

Implement dialogue with Oxford Networks regarding their infrastructure in town and ways the town can ensure their continued presence here

Responsibility/Time Frame: Economic Development Committee & Town Manager/Short & Ongoing

Implement dialogue with Central Maine Power to determine strategies for reducing the frequency of power outages and fluctuations

Responsibility/Time Frame: Town Manager/Short

Encourage the school system to beef up its programs for teaching technology skills in the pre-K through 12 curriculum and through adult education

Responsibility/Time Frame: Buckfield members of the SAD #39 School Board/ Short & and ongoing

Design and deploy a web-based survey of local youth, ages 17 to 25

Responsibility/Time Frame: Economic Development Committee/Short & Ongoing

PLANNING TOPIC Agriculture

Town goal: To protect our valuable farmlands for future agricultural use.

Introduction

Preservation of farming and farmland is a key element for planning in Buckfield. At least thirty families still conduct farming activities on their land and the land of another twenty-five property owners. These farmlands are scattered throughout the town, and they are clearly the source of the rural character, which townspeople value highly in all surveys.

Agriculture in Maine faces global competition, and Buckfield has lost many dairy operations. But new endeavors are appearing. As energy costs affect transportation, good farmland in Buckfield may once again be highly valued for local food production. Beyond their direct economic value to the town, Buckfield's farms provide important natural habitat, open space, and most of the land to which we ascribe scenic value.

Family farmers are contributors to the social fabric. They labor every day within the town. They keep an eye on our town, while most of the inhabitants are in other towns earning their living. Their welfare is directly connected to the health of the land with which they work. They are tied to Buckfield in a way most of us are not.

Policies and strategies for land use planning must encourage and protect agriculture in Buckfield. We must also realize that a farmer's major asset may be his land and that some owners may need to consider development. But we can use education, tax policy, conservation purchases and easements, to help ensure that owners of farmland have options and incentives for preserving the best of their lands for the future.

Based on the results of the Inventory and Analysis and local information, these are concerns that the plan needs to address.

In the last decade the number of acres under active agricultural management has decreased.

The conversion of valuable agricultural land to residential use may limit agricultural regrowth in the future.

The reverting of open fields to woody vegetation is changing the traditional rural agricultural character of Buckfield.

Dividing farm tracts or adding non-agricultural uses may create units of forest and field too limited by size or abutting uses to be viable working units.

Farmers and farmland owners in Buckfield have limited knowledge of opportunities for economically beneficial farmland protection.

Policy

Identify the most valuable agricultural lands and cooperate in strategic action toward their protection.

Strategies

Identify and quantify those lands with soils considered "prime" or of "statewide importance" by the USDA that are still available for agricultural use.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Conservation Committee/Short

Work with Western Foothills Land Trust and other interested organizations to identify other important farmlands and to establish priorities for protection.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Conservation Committee/Ongoing

Organize activities to educate farmland and woodlot owners concerning tax benefits and other incentives to protect land from conversion to other uses.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectmen/Conservation Committee/Ongoing

Review regulations to provide for consideration of appropriate buffering in any development adjacent to farmland considered important.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

PLANNING TOPIC Natural Resources

Town Goal: To protect and conserve its natural resources including water, critical wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitats, rare or endangered plants and animals, and scenic areas.

Introduction

Our natural resources are the foundation of our community. Our forests and farmlands provide employment and products. They help protect our air and water quality and provide critical habitat to wildlife. Our wetlands and ponds, and our river and small streams provide special wildlife habitat and recreational and scenic environments. All of these features give spiritual nourishment, creating the rural landscape most of us treasure. The major threat to our natural resources is sprawl. Unplanned or poorly planned development leads to loss of wildlife corridors and of public access. It can lead to fragmentation of forests, which can interfere with timber management and can reduce wildlife diversity. It can lead to erosion and deterioration of soil and water quality. It can use up our very limited supply of high value agricultural soils.

Based on the results of the Inventory and Analysis and local information, these are the concerns that the plan needs to address.

Approximately 30 percent of Buckfield's land area exceeds 15 percent in slope. Development, road construction, and forestry management practices become more difficult on slopes greater than 15 percent, and the potential for erosion increases.

Wetlands are important natural resources. Their destruction or degradation will increase flooding and eliminate important wildlife habitats.

All potable water with the exception of the approximately 180 customers of the Buckfield Village Corporation, is derived from ground water. Ground water contamination can create health problems and costly solutions.

Activities within the watersheds of ponds or lakes impact water quality. Phosphorus carried by soil particles is a major contributor to degradation of water quality. The town lacks adequate standards to control phosphorus export to surface waters.

North Pond and its watershed, the source of water for Buckfield Village, are located in both Buckfield and Sumner. Watershed management requires joint action.

Development adjacent to the town's ponds, rivers, and streams may lead to water quality degradation, loss of wildlife and fisheries values, and alteration of character of current.

Several areas of important wildlife habitat, including wetlands and deer wintering areas have been mapped in Buckfield. Freshwater wetlands larger than ten acres are regulated under the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act. However, at the present time, deer wintering areas are only minimally regulated at the state level under the Natural Resource Protection Act.

With few exceptions, all sewage treatment in Buckfield is accomplished via subsurface wastewater disposal systems. Much of the land in Buckfield has limitations for low- density residential development utilizing subsurface wastewater disposal systems.

Sand and gravel aquifers can be major suppliers of water. To maintain the quality and quantity of these water resources, protection is necessary.

The Nezinscot River branches are a major natural resource in Buckfield. Land use activities may impact water quality and/or reduce recreation values.

Policies

Assure that land use activities do not degrade or damage critical, sensitive, or important natural resources.

Manage development in the watersheds of North, South, and Mud ponds, and ensure that water quality will not be degraded, and to minimize long term cumulative increases in phosphorus.

Work cooperatively with the town of Sumner in watershed management of North Pond.

Regulate development and other land use activities adjacent to surface waters in order to maintain or improve water quality.

Protect the integrity of open fresh water wetlands as defined in the Shoreland Zoning Law so their overall benefits and values are maintained.

Regulate land use activities in wetlands and the land area within 250 feet of the upland edge of such wetlands identified as being of significant wildlife value by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as required by the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act.

Maintain wildlife resources including deer wintering areas, riparian habitats, wetlands surface water, and upland habitat through habitat conservation and enhancement.

Regulate construction and development in floodplain areas that increase the risk of property loss and/or increase the level of flooding. (enforcement of existing regulations)

Recognize scenic views as a natural resource and assure their values are maintained.

That activities over and in sand and gravel aquifers are undertaken in such a manner as to minimize the threat of groundwater contamination.

Permit development and other land use activities only upon or in soils which are suited to such use.

Ensure that activities and development do not degrade the water quality of those portions of the Nezinscot River and its tributaries that flow within its borders.

Recommended Strategies

Establish a Conservation Committee, whose mission will be to build and maintain awareness of the value of our natural resources and of potential or actual problems, to encourage programs to protect these resources, and to work with the Code Enforcement Officer and Planning Board in developing strategies and regulations for protection.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectmen/Short

The Town's Subdivision Regulations and Land Use Code should support the regulation of any activity within the watershed of North Pond that could degrade or harm the pond's water quality. The Town and Village Corporation should work with the Sumner Planning Board to insure both Towns are practicing the same level of protection.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board & Village Corporation/Short

Establish a baseline record of camps and homes and other land use within the watershed of North Pond in Buckfield or Sumner. It should annually record any changes of ownership or use of land within the watershed. It should maintain ongoing records of water quality.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Conservation Committee/Ongoing

The Town's Subdivision Regulation/Ordinance and Land Use Code should require a phosphorous impact analysis for development which occurs in the Mud, North, or South Pond watersheds. A high level of protection should be assigned to North Pond and a medium level to Mud and South Pond.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance should place the area within 250 feet of the upland edge of wetlands, identified in the National Wetlands Inventory, in zoning districts that comply with the standards set forth in the State of Maine Guidelines for Municipal Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Ongoing

The Town's Subdivision Regulations/Ordinance and Land Use Code should include provisions that require that, when development activity is proposed that is located in or adjacent to a significant wildlife habitat area as identified by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and/or the Comprehensive Plan, an analysis be conducted by the developer to determine the effects of the proposed activity and necessary mitigation measures to maintain habitat value.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

The Town's Subdivision Regulations/Ordinance and Land Use Code should contain provisions that require an assessment of the impact on scenic views, as identified in the Comprehensive Plan, caused by proposed structural development and should grant the Planning Board authority to require development which is found to adversely affect identified scenic sites and views to minimize such effects through increased setbacks, clustering, and/or location of structures.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

The Town's Subdivision Regulations/Ordinance and Land Use Code should allow the Planning Board to require a hydrogeologic assessment which includes a projection of post development nitrate-nitrogen concentrations.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

The Town's Subdivision Regulations/Ordinance and Land Use Code should allow the Planning Board to request information concerning the effect of a proposed development on deeryards, unique natural areas, and rare and endangered species and impose measures to minimize negative effects upon such areas.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

The Town's Land Use Code should contain provisions which require that proposed new uses or expansions to development other than residential meet standards that will safeguard groundwater resources including sand and gravel aquifers. These standards should include, but not be limited to, the identification of the potential sources of contamination to groundwater from the proposed use; the utilization of the Best Management Practices endorsed by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to reduce the risk of contamination; a nitrate/ nitrogen analysis; and the installation and regular sampling of water quality monitoring wells for a use deemed to be a significant actual or potential source of pollutants or excessive drawdown.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

PLANNING TOPIC Rare, Endangered, and Significant Natural Features

Town Goal: To maintain the values of rare, endangered, and significant natural features.

Introduction

Two large blocks of land hold Buckfield's known rare species as well as its greatest diversity of habitats. These are Jersey Bog with its tributary Drew Brook watershed, and the South Pond-Owls Head-Streaked Mountain area. The maps of the Beginning with Habitat program reveal how much high-value wetland and forest habitat is contained in these two quite different landscapes.

Both areas were cleared for agriculture in the beginning of the 19th century, but since the 1930's have been reverting to forest and open wetland. Both connect by natural corridors with extensive relatively undeveloped forest stretching north through Sumner and Hartford. Both have remained protected to some degree by their unwelcoming topography and poor soils. Both are now afforded a bit more protection through Shoreland Zoning.

While largely unsuited for development, these two blocks of land have great importance for water quality protection, habitat value, forest products, and recreation. Their importance to the town should only grow, if we can preserve them from fragmentation.

Based on the results of the Inventory and Analysis and local information, these are the concerns that the plan needs to address.

The Jersey Bog and Streaked Mountain areas are large undeveloped blocks of land important to the Town's and region's character. Inappropriate development in these areas could degrade these resources.

The steep slopes of South Pond's watershed on Owls Head make it particularly vulnerable to degradation of water quality through ill-considered land use.

Land in these areas is generally in relatively large lots. Fragmentation or development of these lots creates limitations on forest management and wildlife travel.

Policies

Recognize that Jersey Bog and its watershed is a particularly valuable natural area and support special protection for those resources.

Recognize that the Streaked Mountain and Owls Head area is an important undeveloped area and encourage only low impact land uses on its steep slopes and erodible soils.

Strategies:

Encourage Androscoggin Land Trust to collect information on the natural resources within the Jersey Bog watershed, establishing the current water quality and compiling an inventory of notable plant and animal species and communities within this area. The resulting information may be used to set priorities for conservation efforts.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Conservation Committee/Short

Compile information on the natural resources, topography, and current uses of lands in the Streaked Mountain and Owls Head area to determine whether the town might want to consider protecting open space.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Conservation Committee & land trusts/Ongoing

Encourage land trusts and other organizations to seek protection of sensitive and high value habitats in the South Pond watershed and connecting upland areas around Owls Head and Streaked.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Conservation Committee & Selectmen /Ongoing

Take measures to prevent the widening or paving of the Sodom Road and Mountain Road to prevent them becoming greater barriers to wildlife movement.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectmen, Roads Committee & Planning/Short Board

PLANNING TOPIC

Scenic Resources

Town Goal: Maintain and enhance scenic values.

Introduction

A century ago long views were possible from scores of spots in Buckfield. As the 19th century pastures and fields have reverted to woodland, the number of good outlooks has shrunk. Every survey on record shows these outlooks are highly valued by townspeople, and they are attractive to the visitors in our region.

These views are important in many ways. They allow us to look out on wildlife and farm animals, hills and mountains, sunrise and sunset. They remind us of our history as we look out on a landscape that has gone from forest to predominantly farmland and then returned to forest with islands of farmland. They give us something of the elation our ancestors felt when they

were able to step into a natural break in the forest and glimpse where they had been and were going.

The Inventory and Analysis Section shows thirty-two sites along our public roads were recorded and given a numerical rating for quality. But a circled numerical rating may not express the emotional reaction we experience driving or walking along a half mile of hay land in North Buckfield village, looking over sweeping vistas from Owl's Head past Streaked to Turner Hill..

Most of these views exist because of land still used for agriculture. They can disappear, if fields revert to woodland. They can be greatly diminished, if a line of homes is placed across the foreground of the viewshed or a large structure is placed on the ridge of a hill. In order to protect as much of this resource as possible we must act as a town and in cooperation with individuals and local land trusts.

Based on the results of the Inventory and Analysis and local information, these are the concerns that the plan needs to address.

Maintenance of scenic outlooks is currently dependent on continuation of farming.

Future land use activities and/or development may reduce scenic values.

Protecting farmers' rights and abilities to farm needs town support.

There is a need to educate owners and townspeople concerning options and incentives for protection.

The majority of scenic view locations have unsuitable areas to stop and admire views.

Policy

Recognize scenic views as a natural resource and as an economic enhancement and assure their values are maintained.

Strategies

Subdivision Regulations and any Town land use regulations or ordinances should contain provisions that require an assessment of the impact on scenic views, as identified in the Comprehensive Plan, caused by proposed structural development and grant the Planning Board authority to require development that is found to adversely affect identified scenic sites and views to minimize such effects through increased setbacks, clustering, and/or location of structures.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Ongoing

Consider building a turnout or suitable shoulder at any viewshed where safety seems to be an issue and the public right-of-way permits it or the landowner is willing to deed space.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Road Committee/Ongoing

Inform owners of view sites of methods and incentives for preserving these open views in perpetuity.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Conservation Committee/Ongoing

Establish communication with Androscoggin Land Trust, Western Foothills Land Trust, Maine Farmland Trust, and other relevant organizations regarding the viewsheds mapped and rated in this plan.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Conservation Committee/Short

PLANNING TOPIC

Transportation

Town Goal: To assure that the roads that are maintained by the town are maintained to support the ever growing demands placed on them.

Introduction

Buckfield's transportation system is in the State and local highway system. Although Buckfield was once served by rail, only the right-of-way, which runs in a north/south direction though the center of Buckfield remains.

Traditionally, the maintenance of a town's road system has been second only to education in the amount of tax dollars expended annually. Buckfield has approximately 39.34 miles of public roadway, the State maintains 12.8 miles of road in Buckfield.

Based on the results of the Inventory and Analysis and local information, these are concerns the plan needs to address.

The slow down in the road improvement plan to rebuild or surface 3 – 5 miles per year.

The need for affordable public transportation needs to be addressed.

The limited use of some of our older roads that have little or no development.

Policies

Support the efforts of Road Committee appointed by the Board of Selectmen to continue in the investment in our transportation system.

The town should maintain a rigorous inspection of all roads on an annual basis.

Continue to develop technical expertise in the construction and repair of our roads.

Strategies

Continue to support the Road committee and act on the recommendations of the committee in a timely matter.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectmen/on going

Send road personnel to classes that will provide the needed expertise to continue to improve our road program.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Road Commissioner/on going

Work with MDOT staff to better understand the ways in which the town can better plan road work for the future.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Road Commissioner/on going

PLANNING TOPIC

Outdoor Recreation

Town Goal: To assure that traditional outdoor recreation opportunities continue and future demands for outdoor recreation are met.

Introduction

Buckfield's natural resources encourage varied recreation. However, at present access to land and water for recreational activities depends largely on continuing landowner cooperation. The Streaked Mountaineers Snowmobile Club has worked with landowners for more than three decades to design and maintain more than 35 miles of trails. With the breakup of the former United Timber lands the town was able to buy the railroad bed that now functions as a multi-use recreational trail

Several discontinued or abandoned town roads, most notably in the Streaked Mountain/Owl's Head area and in the northwest corner of town, provide a chance to enjoy relatively undeveloped woodland. A walking path is in the process of being developed on town property behind the municipal center. The Recreation Committee is working with the Selectmen to consolidate and enlarge the ball fields and playground in the village. These fields are oriented to youth programs

The Nezinscot River may be the recreational resource townspeople most ignore. People come from out of state to canoe and kayak here, and fishermen seek trout from it, yet generally we ignore it.

Based on the results of the Inventory and Analysis and local information, these are concerns the plan needs to address.

There are no trails devoted only to “passive” recreation: walking, horseback riding, skiing, snowshoeing.

Increased access to land and water will require increased organized stewardship to guard against environmental degradation and landowner alienation.

The lack of a launch area with off-road parking is a logistical and safety problem for canoeists and kayakers on the Nezinscot River.

Policies

Support the efforts of The Streaked Mountaineers Snowmobile Club to maintain a snowmobile trail system.

Seek suitable public access sites to the Nezinscot River.

Cooperate in considering access to South Pond including a boat launch and swimming area.

Continue the development of the playing fields and playground off North Hill Road in the Buckfield Village.

Maintain its riverside property at the municipal complex for recreation and natural resource protection.

Strategies

Continue to support the Streaked Mountain Snowmobile Club by allocating to that organization snowmobile registration fees

Responsibility/Time Frame: Town Meeting/annually

Assess potential access locations to the Nezinscot River and South Pond and through donations, easements or purchase, acquire public access rights as needed.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Conservation Commission/Mid

PLANNING TOPIC

Land Use/Development Patterns

Town Goal: To direct development to encourage orderly growth, maintain community and minimize the fiscal impacts of future development.

Introduction

Buckfield has a total land area of 36 square miles (23,075 acres) and is ranked 25th in land area among the organized towns of Oxford County. Forests or woodlands cover the majority of land in the town (approximately 19,000 acres). Major tracts of woodland are found in the south-western and north-eastern quarters of Buckfield. The sale and breakup of more than three thousand acres of land formerly owned by United Timber in these areas has led to some changes of use and the removal of about 845 acres from Tree Growth. Total forest land now in Tree Growth or other protective status is about 5778 acres.

Probably only a bit more than 10 percent of Buckfield's land is actively farmed, but the compilation of farming activities in the Agriculture section of this volume shows surprising vitality. Apple growing may be the most economically significant agricultural activity in Buckfield. Currently about 225 acres are devoted to apple production. The major orchards are located on North Hill and South Hill and off Paris Hill Road in the west side of town. Hay production and pasturing of livestock use by far the most farm land and those parcels are scattered over most of the town. These lands give us our views, remind us of our history, provide critical wildlife habitat, and help define who we are.

The 2000 Census reported 693 year-round dwelling units in Buckfield up from 614 in 1990 and 463 in 1980. The estimate of total units in 2005 is 790, a 14% increase for the five-year period. More than nine out of ten residential dwellings (year-round and seasonal) are located on individual lots rather than in multi-family structures.

While Buckfield contains many small businesses, land devoted strictly to commercial use is minimal. Buckfield Village is the historic and current commercial center of town. Tilton's Market and Northeast Bank anchor the intersection of Route 140 with Route 117, and several other businesses are within walking distance in the village. Other businesses are scattered throughout the town. Industrial and manufacturing land use is found primarily in or immediately adjacent to Buckfield Village. The largest facilities in operation are R.E. Lowell on North Hill Road and Wells Wood Turning on Route 117.

Buckfield Village has the characteristics of the traditional New England village. Nineteenth century architecture predominates, and residential styles run from center-chimney cape through classic revival and gothic to 1920's bungalows and post WWII "ranches."

North Buckfield Village is now residential. Neither three-phase power nor The Village Corporation water supply serves this area. Nineteenth century architecture predominates and the former Grange Hall has been saved as a residence and studio.

Land that is not utilized for agriculture, residential, commercial, manufacturing/industrial or institutional land use is classed as “undeveloped.” This land may be in forest or commercial woodlots or open wetlands. About 19,000 acres of the town are included in this classification. Significant blocks of this land are in the Owls Head/Streaked Mountain area and the Drew Brook/Jersey Bog area.

Based on the results of the Inventory and analysis and local information, these are the concerns the plan needs to address

Much of Buckfield’s residential development in the past 30 years has been in forested areas. Such development may break woodland parcels into a size where forest management becomes impractical. Traditional recreational uses may also be affected.

Only a small portion of forestland and farmland is protected under Tree Growth, Open Space, or other programs. Land owners may be unaware of the programs, or they may believe the tax savings would not justify the change of classification..

Over the last ten years there has been a decrease in the number of acres under active agricultural management.

The reverting of once open fields to woody vegetation is changing the traditional rural agriculturally based character of Buckfield. The loss of grassland also removes the natural habitat of many animal species.

New residential development in proximity or adjacent to commercial agriculture may create conflicting uses.

Residential development over the past 30 years has been primarily the result of individual lot sales and subdivisions of less than five lots. In the last three years, however, the Planning Board has been presented with five subdivision proposals ranging from twelve lots to over thirty.

Since 1995 an estimated 115 new residential structures have been constructed or placed adjacent to town roads. Other than the decline in agriculture, this development pattern has had the greatest impact upon the town’s character.

Subdivisions or other significant development off Buckfield’s “back” roads may require significant improvement of those roads.

The town lacks suitable standards to review non-residential development.

The intermixing of potentially conflicting land uses (residential/ commercial) is possible in Buckfield.

Buckfield contains significant undeveloped land areas. Future development at densities currently permitted will permanently alter these areas.

The Owl's Head/ Streaked Mountain and Jersey Bog/Drew Brook areas are large undeveloped areas important to the town's and region's character. Inappropriate development in these areas could degrade their resources.

Policies

Locate and concentrate site development to preserve water quality and important natural habitat.

Allow or encourage smaller lot sizes in the village area in keeping with the historic patterns.

Encourage the concept of clustering of development units to prevent sprawl and preserve open land.

Consider incentives to help direct growth.

Protect the large undeveloped habitat blocks in the Owl's Head/Streaked Mountain and Jersey Bog/Drew Brook areas from degradation and fragmentation.

Allow for appropriate commercial development within village areas.

Discourage the creation of random uncontrolled commercial development along Routes 117 and 140.

Direct new commercial development, except that commercial development associated with rural locations, away from agricultural areas.

Provide for manufacturing land uses in those areas where they will not conflict with adjacent less intense land uses or cause environmental degradation.

Direct new residential development to those areas where municipal services can be the most efficiently provided.

That new residential development is located on or served by roads that have the capacity to handle new traffic generated by such development.

Direct new residential development in such a manner that it will not conflict with agriculture and commercial forestry.

When new residential development is to be located along existing public roads shared or common access points will be used.

Provide for innovative residential development techniques that conserve land, including agricultural and forest land, significant natural areas and reduce construction costs.

Maintain, upgrade and expand where appropriate the traditional villages.

Designate suitable locations for mobile home parks.

Promote an appropriate level of management of forest lands.

Encourage an agricultural land base.

Attempt to reduce the economic effect of the differential between agricultural land values and the development value of the agricultural land.

Minimize the conflicts between agriculture and adjacent land uses.

Regulate automobile graveyards and junkyards in such a manner to reduce environmental degradation and visual impact.

Strategies

Appoint an Ordinance Development Committee (Planning Board, Comprehensive Plan Committee representatives and other interested individuals) to draft a Land Use Code, which includes subdivision and site review standards and other ordinances called for in the Comprehensive Plan.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectmen/Short

Seek Implementation Grant funds from the State Planning Office. These funds would be utilized to obtain planning assistance in ordinance revision and development.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectmen/Short

Encourage agricultural landowners to participate in any state program for the purchase of development rights of farmland and assist in application/proposal development.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Selectmen & Planning Board/Ongoing

Develop clear objectives and guidelines to use clustered development to protect and maintain open space.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

Include in the Land Use Code guidelines that provide a separation between new residential subdivisions and existing agricultural land uses.

Responsibility/Time Frame: Planning Board/Short

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Introduction

The primary purpose of the Future Land Use Plan and Map is to establish future development patterns. It is based upon the various policies and strategies contained in the Plan.

The narrative of the Future Land Use Plan identifies future development characteristics. The Future Land Use Map visually depicts the future development classifications. It is the purpose of the Future Land Use Map to indicate the general locations of desired future development characteristics. The map was developed utilizing various information obtained during the development of the comprehensive plan, including environmentally sensitive areas, soil characteristics and current development patterns. It was developed without consideration of individual property lines or ownership and thus should be viewed as a visualization of how the comprehensive plan recommends the Town develop in the years ahead.

The Planning and Land Use Regulation Act requires the Comprehensive Plan to, at a minimum, divide Buckfield into two basic geographical areas for the purpose of applying the plan's various policies and implementation strategies. The land use plan must include a "growth area" classification - or a combination of land use classifications that constitutes a "growth area." The land use plan must also include a "rural area" classification - or a combination of land use classification that constitutes a "rural area."

Growth areas are defined as those land areas within the municipality into which the municipality intends to direct the future growth and development planned to occur during the 10-year planning period. The designation of growth areas is intended to ensure that planned growth and development is directed to areas most suitable for such growth and development and away from areas in which growth and development would be incompatible with the protection of rural resources.

Rural areas are those land areas within the municipality where it intends to protect agricultural, forest, scenic areas and other open space land areas from incompatible development. The designation of rural areas is intended to provide for the long-term protection of resource production and open space and scenic lands from incompatible development.

Land Use Plan

A major purpose of the comprehensive plan is to establish a guide for ongoing development of the community. The plan establishes the foundation for land use decisions, defines growth and rural areas within the community, and aids in the definition of future capital improvement needs. It is, therefore, important that the plan sets forth a realistic development guide so that the community can prosper and at the same time maintain valued characteristics.

The Land Use Plan identifies desired future development patterns and characteristics. The Land Use Map synthesizes the statement of policies presented in the comprehensive plan. It must be realized that as demands dictate, the Land Use Plan and Map will require revisions. Principles which guided the development of the Land Use Plan included the following:

The type and density of development should be compatible with the natural environment. The maintenance and protection of surface and ground water, the soils capacity for subsurface sewage disposal, the slope of land and the presence of unique natural areas were key factors in the development of the Land Use Map.

The desire to encourage agriculture and forestry.

The desire to manage development so that Buckfield's valued character including farmland, scenic views, natural resources and open spaces are maintained.

The desire to provide for suitable locations for appropriate commercial and industrial development.

The desire to balance landowners' rights with the need for the protection of our natural resources

The desire to maintain, upgrade and expand traditional village areas where appropriate.

The desire to maintain the property and social values of residential areas.

The desire to maintain important wildlife areas and travel corridors.

The desire to maintain the high quality of Buckfield's own natural resources and those it shares.

The desire to maintain the significant natural resources of the Jersey Bog and Streaked Mountain areas.

The desire that the type and location of development not overburden municipal services including the transportation system.

The desire to discourage random, ill-planned residential and commercial development along existing major roads.

The desire to maintain Buckfield's historic heritage.

Special Protection Areas

Certain areas within Buckfield warrant special consideration due to their likelihood of degradation as the result of some types of land use activities. Land use activities within these areas require stricter regulation or a greater level of local review than in other areas. These areas include:

Wetlands

Open freshwater wetlands of 10 acres and more as mapped by the United States Department of the Interior and the areas within 250 feet of their upland edge that are identified as having high and moderate wildlife values should be designated as resource protection areas that prohibit structure development. Areas within 250 feet of the upland edge of other freshwater wetlands of 10 acres and more not rated or rated as low wildlife value should be designated limited recreational under shoreland zoning.

Other wetlands, through standards contained in ordinances, should be conserved to maintain their resource values and functions.

Sand and Gravel Aquifers

Because of potential for degradation and/or contamination, these areas require that new development or redevelopment take safeguards to minimize potential degradation. The Land Use Code should contain performance standards, including the use of Best Management Practices that protect these water resources.

Shoreland Areas

The land area within 250 feet from the normal high water line of Mud, North and South Ponds, the Nezinscot River and 75 feet from streams is critical in maintaining water quality. These areas should be utilized for low density residential and nonstructural uses. The exception is Buckfield Village where commercial land use activities should be allowed.

Watersheds

The land area which drains to a pond, or watershed, directly affects the quality of that pond's water quality. Development within watersheds should be regulated to minimize water quality degradation and phosphorus export.

Jersey Bog/Drew Brook and Streaked Mountain Areas

These areas require special development standards so that future development does not diminish their natural values.

Critical wildlife habitats including travel corridors

These areas should be maintained through development standards that regulate detrimental alteration to critical areas and minimize other negative impacts.

Floodplains

The land area within 250 feet of the normal high water mark of the East and West Branch Nezinscot Rivers and the Nezinscot River that are also in the 100-year floodplain should be designated a resource protection district which prohibits structural development.

The exception to a resource protection district is those areas where industry and concentrations of development exist. In these areas, the Floodplain Management Ordinance should be strictly enforced.

The land within all other 100 year floodplains should be regulated as required by the Floodplain Management Ordinance.

Steep Slopes

Areas of two or more contiguous acres with sustained slopes of 20% or greater that fall within the jurisdiction of the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act should be placed in a resource protection district which prohibits structural development. In other areas, development standards should require strict erosion and sedimentation control measures and provide for safe traffic movement.

Growth District

The purpose of the Growth District is to provide areas of sufficient size and in suitable locations for orderly residential, commercial, industrial, public and institutional land use and development. Residential uses including single family, multi-family and mobile home parks should be permitted. Densities for single family dwellings should not be less than one unit per 40,000 square feet with not less than a 35-foot front setback from the right-of-way. Road frontage standards should be flexible provided side yard setbacks are not less than 25 feet. Multi family development densities should comply with the standards set forth in the Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules – (approximately 20,000 square feet per dwelling unit).

Non residential uses which include but are not limited to commercial, manufacturing, industrial, public, civic and institutional should be encouraged to locate in the Growth District. The Land Use Code should establish an accelerated review process for such development when proposed to be located in the Growth District. Where commercial development occurs adjacent to Routes 117 and 140 outside of the compact village area a minimum setback of 50 feet from the right-of-way, and a buffer of a minimum of 20 feet between the right-of-way and parking areas should be required.

A minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet should be required for nonresidential uses with the maximum lot coverage including buildings, parking and storage areas not to exceed 75 percent.

Rural District

The purpose of the Rural District is to maintain the rural character of Buckfield while allowing development compatible with rural land uses including agriculture and forestry.

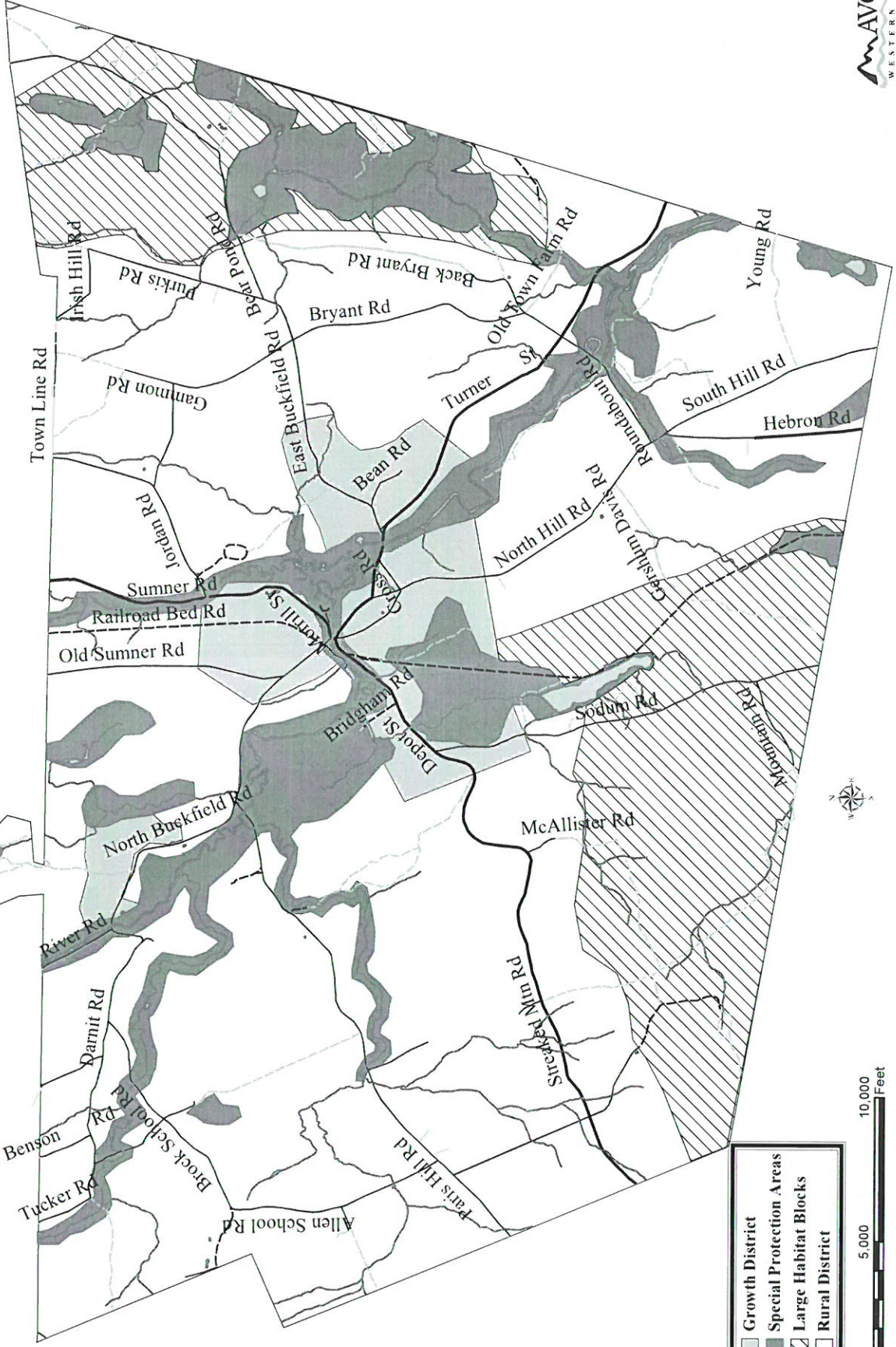
Single family, multi family and cluster/open space development should be permitted. Mobile home parks should be prohibited, except existing parks should be allowed to expand. Residential densities should not be less than one unit per 40,000 square feet. Road frontage standards should be a minimum of 200 feet.

Where residential development will be adjacent to existing public streets, the development of new streets or limitations on the number of driveways will be required.

Commercial, manufacturing and industrial uses associated with rural locations should be permitted. These include but are not limited to agricultural and forest products processing. Sales and services, recreation uses, saw mills and neighborhood stores should be allowed with site plan review. Lot size requirements for nonresidential development should be a minimum of 40,000 square feet, have a maximum lot coverage, including structures, parking and storage areas, not to exceed 50 percent and front setbacks of not less than 50 feet measured from the right-of-way.

Buckfield, Maine

Future Land Use



- Growth District
- Special Protection Areas
- Large Habitat Blocks
- Rural District



CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Introduction

Capital Investments as used in the Capital Investment Plan refer to expenditures greater than \$10,000 that do not recur annually, have a useful life of greater than three years and result in fixed assets. They may include new or expanded physical facilities, rehabilitation or replacement of existing facilities, major pieces of equipment which are expensive and have a relatively long period of usefulness, the cost of engineering or architectural studies and services, and the acquisition of land for community facilities.

Capital Investments or improvements usually require the expenditure of public funds: town, state, federal or some combination thereof. Revenue limitations make it impossible to pay for or implement all needed major public improvements at any one time or even over a multi-year period. The formal Capital Improvement Program recommended in the Comprehensive Plan will be the process whereby the needs identified here are formalized and specific priorities and implementation periods targeted.

The following list presents the significant capital investments that are anticipated over the next ten years. Individual items represent necessary equipment replacement or upgrading, and facility improvements. In addition, the various identified capital investments have been assigned a high, medium or low priority which relates to the urgency to implement.

Fire Department

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Tanker	\$100,000.00	H
New Station	\$500,000.00 (?)	M
New Engine	\$250,000.00	M
Brush Truck	\$ 90,000.00	M

Rescue Department

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Ambulance	\$150,000.00	H
New Station	\$500,000.00	H
Plymo Vent Exhaust System	\$ 20,000.00	H

Highway Department

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Pick-up	\$ 5,000.00	M
Skid Steer	\$ 30,000.00	M/H
Plow Trucks	\$120,000.00 each	HML
Loader		
Town & Transfer Station	\$125,000.00	H
Grader	\$ 75,000.00	L

Village Improvements

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Village Upgrade	\$ 50,000.00	L
High Street	\$250,000.00	H
Sidewalk/Rt. #140	\$1,500,000.00	H
		DOT

Transfer Station

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Well & Septic	\$ 15,000.00	H
Expansion-Land	\$ 50,000.00	M
Fuel Storage	\$ 35,000.00	H

Recreation Commission

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Event Hall	\$200,000.00	M
Event Hall Kitchen	\$ 25,000.00	M
Recreation Trail Improvements	\$ 50,000.00	
Remodel Bessey's Field: 2 Fields; Snack Shack; Lights	\$150,000.00	

Capital Improvements Financing

Capital Improvements, as they are prioritized and scheduled for implementation through Buckfield's multi-year Capital Improvement Program, require a funding source or means of financing. A variety of techniques for financing capital improvements exist and are outlined below.

Current Revenues (Pay-As-You-Go)

The most fundamental and simplest means of paying for capital improvements is on a pay-as-you-go basis: funding capital improvements from current revenues.

Bonding

Borrowing against future (general obligation bonds) or future service charges or fees (revenue bonds) to finance long-term public improvements is widely practiced and makes good sense from the standpoint of “paying-as-you-use.”

Reserve Fund

A reserve fund is analogous to a family savings account for a future big ticket purchase (car, appliance, etc.). Reserve funds are often used to replace equipment with a known service life whose cost and date of replacement are fairly accurately known and can be planned for.

Time Phased Projects

Some very large scale projects can be broken up into time phased increments and thus paid for over a period of several years through annual bonding or pay-as-you-go arrangements. This, again, avoids sudden tax increases.

Grants and Cost Sharing

A number of state and federal grant-in-aid programs exist to share the cost of certain public investments. Full advantage should be taken of these cost-sharing programs to maximize the benefits to the community, recapture an equitable share of locally generated taxes and secure vitally needed public improvements.

Low Interest Loans

In some cases, the federal and state governments have developed special low interest loan programs to support certain public improvements.

Capital Investment Plan Implementation

To implement the Capital Investment Plan, the Town of Buckfield should develop a formal Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

The CIP provides a mechanism for estimating capital requirements, scheduling projects over a fixed period with appropriate planning and implementation, budgeting high priority projects, and developing a project revenue policy for proposed improvements, coordinating the activities of various departments in meeting project schedules, monitoring and evaluating the progress of capital projects, and informing the public of projected capital improvements.

In its most basic form, the CIP is no more than a schedule listing capital improvements, in order of priority, together with cost estimates and the proposed method of financing.

Each year the CIP should be reviewed and updated to reflect changing community priorities, unexpected emergencies or events, unique opportunities, cost changes or alternate financing strategies. The CIP is comprised of three elements:

- a. inventory and maintenance plan;
- b. capital improvements budget (first year); and
- c. long-term CIP (5 years)

Policy:

It is a policy of the Town of Buckfield to develop a multi-year Capital Investment Program.

Implementation Strategies:

Develop and update annually the Capital Improvement Program.

Responsibility:

Selectmen/Budget Committee

Time Frame:

Ongoing

BUCKFIELD, MAINE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Section II

Inventory and Analysis

I NTRODUCTION

The comprehensive planning process should be based on an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the community. In planning terms, the "community" means its people, infrastructure, services, and natural features. To provide that factual informational base, the Comprehensive Plan Committee collected, organized, and analyzed information about Buckfield. Areas considered in the inventory and analysis elements related to population, economy, housing, transportation, natural resources, historic, cultural, and archaeological resources, land use and development patterns, outdoor recreation, public facilities, fiscal capacity and natural hazards.

The information to prepare the inventory and analysis came from a number of sources. Individual committee members collected information only available in Buckfield. Such information included scenic locations, home sale prices and recent development trends. Other information came from state and federal sources. State agencies provided information on the location of wildlife habitat, traffic volumes, traffic accidents and lake and pond phosphorous loads. Most of the characteristics of the Buckfield' population were obtained from the 1990 and 2000 Censuses.

The inventory and analysis also made several forecasts for the 10-year planning period. These included year-round population growth and year-round housing demand. Such forecasts were based on past trends and acceptable forecasting techniques.

The inventory and analysis is intended to be a snapshot of Buckfield based on the best information available in 2004-06. Communities are dynamic places and thus the inventory and analysis may not reflect all community characteristics at time of the adoption of the plan or five years from adoption. However, it presented a reliable picture of Buckfield and provided the necessary direction for the Comprehensive Plan Committee to identify issues and implications and formulate town goals and recommendations.

Archeological and Historic Resources

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission reports no known prehistoric or historic archeological sites in Buckfield. However, the potential exists for prehistoric sites to be found along the Nezinscot River. In addition, historic archeological sites of early 18th century European settlements might be found in other locations including former or early roads.

The remains of nineteenth century economic activities can be found beside the Nezinscot River and the brooks that feed it, and along former and early roads. Some of these sites may have potential archeological interest, but have no form of protection. Also the Nezinscot River and these streams are an important scenic resource. In particular, the Basin Falls, Bicknell Falls, Back Falls and Youngs Falls should be mentioned. Any development in Buckfield should preserve this beauty for generations.

The beauty of Buckfield's late eighteenth and nineteenth century domestic architecture is one of the reasons people like to live in Buckfield. Incorporated in 1793 and for a time the most populous township in Oxford County, Buckfield's early prosperity is reflected in numerous surviving homes, many with barns attached, built in a distinctive rural New England style. Their style contrasts with the urban style of architecture found, for example, in Lewiston, Auburn or Portland. The aesthetic value and historic interest of these structures can only increase.

Preservation of this heritage is important if the character of Buckfield is to be maintained. Currently only the Union Church ("Church on the Hill") and the Zadoc Long Free Library are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A public education program might encourage property owners to add their homes to this list. Examples follow.

STRUCTURE	DATE BUILT	LOCATION	CURRENT OWNER
Jim Warren house	1782	18 Jim Warren Rd	T&J Brackett
Joshua & Sarah Young house	1782	53 Young Road	Young Family
Abijah Buck house	1790	202 North Buckfield Rd	L Doggett
Enoch Hall house	1792	71 Bean Rd	E&P Bean
Orin Record	1798	59 High Street	M Iveson
Harold Record house	early 1800's	351 Turner Street	W&P Sullivan
Wm. Emery Campbell	1802	25 Morrill Street	Fulenwider
John D. Long house	1806	314 North Hill Rd	T Ladd
Bernard & Alice Robinson	c1807	78 Morrill Street	T&V Dunn
Dr. Hall	1812	60 Loring Hill Road	S Vogelsang
Russell Pratt house	1815	428 Turner Street	Gladys Lowell

STRUCTURE	DATE BUILT	LOCATION	CURRENT OWNER
John Buck house	c1816	231 Paris Hill Road	Elsie Knightly
Deacon David Farrar house	1825	415 Paris Hill Rd	T&S Stocker
Zadoc Long house	1825	14 Turner Street	Nathalie Roy
Ezikiel Record	1825	93 Loring Hill Road	S Perkins
Nathaniel Shaw house	1829-36	50 Jordan Road	K&S Johnson
Leila & Everett Conant (Buckfield Inn)	c1830	60 Turner Street	Russell Clark
Noah Prince house	1831	349 Paris Hill Rd	K Cooper
Old Church on the Hill	1831-32	77 High Street	Buckfield
S. Record house	1834	452 North Hill Road	P&S Trundy
Cushman House	1847	18 Bennett Road	R&B Bennett
Northeast Bank Building	1848	2 Depot Street	NE Bank
William Bridgham	1850	81 High Street	R Littlefield
Ozen Spaulding	1852	44 High Street	D,MB Galway
Julia Ripley	1854	48 High Street	Ivan Smith
Bennett Record house	1855	6 North Buckfield Rd	Phil Bray
M. Putnam	1856	33 High Street	J Jozwiak
S. Thomes	c1858	32 High Street	A&S Hill
Nathan Storer	1866	29 High Street	Mari-Jo Quirk
Buckfield Comm. Church	1873	28 Turner Street	Buckfield
Charles Mason	1873	42 High Street	J&LDonahue
Sullivan Andrews	1876	41 High Street	Andrews Funeral Home
Hiram Himes	1879	45 High Street	D&M Arthur
James Jewett	1883	16 High Street	J&E Wiley
Zadoc Long Free Library	1901	5 Turner Street	Buckfield
Joshua Heald house	_____	16 River Road	Donald Heald
Clarence Foster	_____	126 Sodom Road	S&A Gowell

Population

Introduction

During the decade of the 1970s, Buckfield's population rose rapidly - from 929 in 1970 to 1,333 in 1980, or 43.5% in ten years. In the decade of the 1980s, the rate of growth slowed to 17.5%, and during the 1990's it tapered off to 10%. However, Buckfield's population seems once again to be on the rise - at an estimated 12.1% over the past 5 years, as compared with Oxford County's 3.7% estimated growth for the same period.

**Past and Potential Population and Growth
Buckfield and Oxford County**

Town	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000	2005	% Change 2000-2005	2016 (Projected)
Buckfield	1,566	1,723	10.0%	1,931*	12.1%	2,122****
Hartford	722	963	33.4%	1025	6.4%	1375
Hebron	878	1,053	19.9%	1115	5.9%	1400
Paris	4,492	4,793	6.7%	4995	4.2%	5380
Sumner	761	854	12.2%	860	0.7%	1070
Turner	4,315	4,972	15.5%	5390	8.4%	6450
Oxford Co.	52,602	54,755	4.1%	56,794**	3.7%	59,169*****

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census

*Estimation: 790 total housing units (Buckfield Town Office);

(Average household size: 2.52 (MSHA estimate); Estimated vacancy rate: 3%)

** MSHA Estimate

*** By Least Squares, using 1970-2000 Census, and 2005 Estimate.

***** Maine State Planning Office, Dec. 2005

Buckfield Demographics

A comparison of age groups from 1990 to 2005 indicates that Buckfield's under 19-year old population has dropped as a percentage of the total population in the past fifteen years. In addition, the population of those in the childbearing years 25-44 has decreased from 35.5% of the population to 30.9%.

These changes could foreshadow lower birthrates and a lower school population in the next decade, unless Buckfield experiences an in migration of residents in the 5-44 age categories.

**Buckfield's Age Distribution
1990-2005**

Age	1990		2000		2005		2016 (est.)	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Under 5	150	9.58	107	6.21	98	5.40	122	5.7
5-19*	377	24.07	389	22.58	387	21.33	392	18.4
20-24	86	5.49	95	5.51	103	5.68	106	5.0
25-44	556	35.50	532	30.88	516	28.45	567	26.7
45-64	257	16.41	430	24.96	519	28.61	639	30.1
65 and over	140	8.94	170	9.87	191	10.53	299	14.1
Totals	1566	100	1723	100	1814	100	2125	100

Sources: 1993 Buckfield Comprehensive Plan, 2000 Census; 2005 MSHA Estimates; Maine State Planning Office (2016 estimate)

Note: Some interpolation was necessary, due to different age categories among sources.

**Changes in Median Age
Buckfield and Oxford County
1990-2005**

The median age of the population rose about 5 years from 1990-2000 – in Buckfield, as well as Oxford County and the State. Buckfield's median age in both census years was two years younger than that of Maine, and four years younger than that of Oxford County.

	1990	2000	2005
Buckfield	31.6	36.8	37.4
Oxford County	35.0	40.2	40.3
Maine	33.0	38.6	40.6

Sources: 1990; 2000 U.S. Census; 2005 Housing Facts for Buckfield, Oxford Co. MSHA

Reasons behind Population Changes

The two components of population growth or decline in a town are natural increase or decrease (number of births minus deaths) and 'in' or 'out' migration. Between 1990 and 2000, 76% of Buckfield's population increase in the 1990s came from natural increase, and 24% from net 'in' migration. However, over the past 6 years, 79% (203) of the population increase of 257 has been due to net 'in' migration, and only 21% (54) due to natural increase – almost reversing the proportions seen in the 1990's.

Natural Increase in the Population 1990-2005

Year	Births	Deaths	Natural Increase
1990	28	7	21
1991	24	9	15
1992	16	12	4
1993	15	3	12
1994	22	15	7
1995	23	11	12
1996	33	14	19
1997	15	9	6
1998	27	14	13
1999	16	6	10
Decade Totals	219	100	119
2000	21	11	10
2001	18	8	10
2002	15	14	1
2003	26	20	6
2004	20	8	12
2005	26* (Preliminary Data)	11*	15*
6-year Total	126	72	54

Source: Maine DHS, Bureau of Health – Office of Data, Research, and Vital Statistics

Buckfield's Population by Income

In order to determine the need for housing and other services, it is important for a town to understand the distribution of income within the community. Unfortunately, these figures are not available for 2005, but figures from the 2000 Census are given below. The median household income in 1999 was \$36,820 in Buckfield compared to \$37,240 for the State of Maine.

Proportional Makeup of Population by Income –1999

Income in 1999	Number of households	Percent
Less than \$10,000	42	6.3
\$10,000 - \$14,999	33	5.0
\$15,000 - \$24,999	90	13.5
\$25,000 - \$34,999	143	21.4
\$35,000 - \$49,999	135	20.2
\$50,000 - \$74,999	140	21.0
\$75,000 - \$99,999	55	8.2
\$100,000 - \$149,999	19	2.8
\$150,000 and over	10	1.5
Total	667	100

Source: 2000 Census

Housing

Year-round Housing – Current and Projected Future Inventory

Housing growth in Buckfield has followed a linear trend, increasing consonant with demand generated by population immigration and to some extent a natural increase. Predicting future availability in the housing market is difficult, because factors such as type of housing (single or multi-unit) and the proportion of rental units to total housing units depend upon the nature of the economy. The estimates have made the assumption that current distributions will remain the same. However, housing statistics for 2005 show there is already a need for more affordable housing in Buckfield. This need, which could be increased by a downturn in the economy, a further rise in interest rates, or an increased income gap, will probably increase the demand for more rental housing, or, at the very least, smaller, more affordable owner-occupied housing units, particularly for young families.

Total Number of Year-round Housing Units Buckfield and Oxford County Actual and Projected

	1990	10-yr. increase	2000	10-yr increase	2005	5-yr increase	2010 ***	2016 ***
Buckfield	614*	32.6%	693*	12.8%	790**	14.0%	829	911
Oxford County	21,947	16.9%	24,132	10.0%	26,027	7.9%		28,706

Sources: *1990, 2000 Census **Buckfield Town Office *** Projected By Least Squares

Distribution of Buckfield's Year-round Housing by Type

Units In Structure	1990*	2000**	2005***	2016 Est.****
1-unit, detached	426	505	584	673
1-unit, attached		7		
2 units	61	18	6	7
3-4 Unit		10	14	16
5 and over		21	19	22
Mobile Homes	127	152	167	192
Total Year-round Housing Units	614	691	790	911

*1993 Buckfield Comprehensive Plan; **2000 U.S. Census ***Buckfield Town Office; ****Estimate based on current percentages.

Seasonal Housing

Buckfield's seasonal housing stock is not significant. There is a seasonal campground accommodating about 70 camper units, about 30 of which remain on site year-round.

Rental Housing

Although the 2000 Census reported 106 occupied rental housing units, Buckfield's 2005 estimate of rental housing, admittedly conservative, is quite a bit lower. We assume that the census is a more accurate way of estimating the number of rental units in a community, and that some of the 698* assumed by the Town to be owner occupied may be rented. It seems unlikely that rental housing in Buckfield would have decreased over the past five years as the cost of home ownership increased. Note: Because of the uncertainty of the 2005 ratio between owner-occupied and rented housing, it was difficult for to make estimates of the numbers of rental and owner-occupied housing for 2015. Therefore, State Planning Office estimates have been used for estimated owner-occupied and rental housing in 2015. 2016 estimates were unavailable.

Distribution of Occupied Housing by Tenure

Year	1990	2000	2005	2015 (Est.)	2015 (SPO Est.)
Owner Occupied	457	562	698*	(see note above)	687
Renter Occupied	99	106	70	(see note above)	144
Total	556	668	768	892**	831

Sources: 1990, 2000: U.S. Census; 2005: Buckfield Town Office

* Assuming a vacancy rate of 3% among owner-occupied houses **By Least Squares

Condition of Housing in Buckfield

In November 1984, a windshield survey was conducted by the Buckfield Community Development Committee to assess structural conditions of residential buildings. Of a total of 470 structures surveyed, 80 or 17% were estimated to be in a deteriorated condition. However, the economic boon of the last half of the 1990s, combined with low mortgage interest rates in recent years, have encouraged not only a rise in new construction, but also a significant level of home improvement activity. At this time, most houses in Buckfield appear to be well maintained and in good condition.

Age of Year-round Housing Stock in Buckfield – 2005

Age of Homes	Owners	Renters	All Homes
2000- April 2005	77	1	78
1999 - March, 2000	6	0	6
1995-1998	66	8	74
1990-1994	61	9	70
1980-1989	106	17	123
1970-1979	111	21	132
1960-1969	23	14	37
1950-1959	23	0	23
1940-1949	13	6	19
1939 or Earlier	152	32	184
Totals	561	107	752

Source: 2000 Census; Buckfield Town Office (2000-2005)

Vacancy Rates in Year-round Housing

According to the 2000 Census, Buckfield had a vacancy rate at that time of 1.8% for homeowners, and 10.7 % for rental units. No figures have been compiled for 2005, but interviews of a sampling of Buckfield landlords indicate there are few, if any, vacancies, and often waiting lists for apartments. Vacancy statistics for owner-occupied houses were unavailable. Only 11 houses were on the market in Buckfield in February 2006, and only four houses in town were known to be unoccupied. A vacancy rate of 3% was used as a conservative figure in estimating 2005 population of Buckfield.

Affordability of Housing in Buckfield - 2005

Background

Housing Prices rose dramatically in Southern Maine, and in many other parts of the nation in the 1980's and 90's, and Buckfield seems to have followed this trend, particularly over the past two years. The median home sales price in Buckfield rose almost 82% from 2000-2005 - from \$79,818 to \$145,000, while median rentals rose almost 38%. Meanwhile, median income for residents has increased just over 14 %, from \$36,821 in 2000 to \$42,041 in 2005.

Income and Housing Costs, Buckfield and Oxford County, 2000-2005

Year	Median Home Price		Median Rent*		Median Income	
	Buckfield	Oxford Co.	Buckfield	Oxford Co.	Buckfield	Oxford Co.
2000	\$79,818	\$79,000	423	418	\$36,821	\$33,435
2001	\$81,250	\$84,250	N/A	469	\$39,345	\$35,965
2002	\$87,500	\$88,000	N/A	653	\$39,467	\$35,379
2003	\$85,950	\$94,900	N/A	614	\$41,141	\$36,545
2004	\$111,500	\$115,000	N/A	600	\$40,469	\$36,868
2005	\$145,000	\$129,900	582	571	\$42,041	\$38,123

Source: MSHA (From Real Estate Transfer Taxes)

* For average two-bedroom apartment

The following gives an indication of income distribution in Buckfield in the Low to Moderate Ranges.

Income Distribution in Buckfield, 2005 Low to Moderate Income

	Income Range	Number of Households – all income groups: 720					
		Owner		Renter		Total	
		#	% of Total	#	% of Total	#	%
Moderate (Low to High Median)	\$42,041-\$63,062	225	31.3	41*	5.7	154	21.4
	\$33,363-\$42,041					112	15.6
Low	\$21,021- \$33,363	105	14.6	29	4.0	135	18.8
Very Low	\$12,612- \$21,021	45	6.3	15	2.1	59	8.2
Extremely Low	<\$12,612	40	5.6	15	2.1	55	7.6
Totals		415	57.8	100	13.9%	514	71.6%

Source: Office of Research and Planning: MSHA (2005 Claritas)

Definition of Affordability

An owner-occupied housing unit is defined to be “affordable” to the household if the unit’s expected sales price can be expected to result in monthly housing costs, (including mortgage principal and interest, mortgage and homeowner’s insurance costs, real estate taxes, and basic utility and energy costs), that do not exceed 28-33% of the household’s gross monthly income.

A renter-occupied housing unit is “affordable” to a household if the unit’s monthly housing costs (including rent and utilities and energy) do not exceed 30% of the household’s gross monthly income.

**Affordable Rents and Home Prices for Buckfield and Oxford County
Very Low, Low, Median and Moderate Income Families
2005**

Income Level	Household Income (High End of Range)		Affordable Gross Rent (For Range)		Affordable Sales Price (For High End of Income Range)	
	Buckfield	Oxford Co.	Buckfield	Oxford Co.	Buckfield	Oxford Co.
Very Low	\$21,021	\$19,062	\$313-\$526	\$286-\$477	\$58,071	\$54,591
Low	\$33,363	\$30,498	\$526-\$834	\$477-\$762	\$95,465	\$90,097
Median	\$42,041	\$38,123	\$834-\$1051	\$762-\$953	\$120,433	\$113,817
Moderate	\$63,062	\$57,185	\$1051-\$1576	\$953-\$1430	\$180,854	\$171,606

Affordability Indexes

Affordability Indexes are a way of tracking the ability of households within a community to pay rent or purchase a house, by giving the ratio of a household's ability to pay to the actual cost of a home purchase or rental unit. The most useful kind of affordability index breaks housing prices and rentals down into cost categories much like the income categories. Doing this gives a clearer picture of the options open to lower income families to purchase lower priced homes. Unfortunately, cost categories of contract rents and home prices are available only in the Census years. For interim years, such as 2005, the only information available is median rents and median housing prices. Therefore, the Affordability Indexes in the following tables tell what percent of the income needed to purchase a *median-priced* home or pay a *median rental* a family of that income can afford. For example, both tables show that a family making 80% of Buckfield median income could afford 98% of the cost of a median-priced home in 2000, but can only afford 66% of the cost of a median-priced home in 2005. An affordability index of 1.0 means that a family of median income has just enough income to purchase a median price home, or pay an average two-bedroom rental.

A comparison of housing affordability in 2005 between Buckfield and Oxford County, where incomes are generally lower, but housing costs are lower as well. The charts on the following page show there is clear need in 2005 for more affordable housing in Buckfield and the region.

**Housing Affordability Indexes for Buckfield
2000 and 2005**

	2000	2005	Change
Median Income	\$36,821	\$42,041	+14.2%
Median Home Price	\$79,88	\$145,000	+81.7%
Median Rent	\$423	\$582	+37.6%

For Families making...	The affordability index for homeownership* is...		
	2000	2005	Change
30% of median income	.35	.23	-.12
50% of median income	.60	.40	-.20
80% of median income	.98	.66	-.32
Median income	1.23	.83	-.40
For Families making...	The affordability index for renting is**...		
30% of median income	.65	.54	-.11
50% of median income	1.09	.90	-.19
80% of median income	1.74	1.43	-.31
Median Income	2.18	1.81	-.38

* For median-priced home ** For average two-bedroom apartment

Housing Affordability Indexes for Buckfield and Oxford County 2005

	Buckfield	Oxford County
Median Income	\$42,042	\$38,123
Median Home Price	\$145,000	\$129,900
Median Monthly Rent	\$582	\$571
For Families making....	The affordability index for home ownership* is...	
30% of median income	.23	.24
50% of median income	.40	.42
80% of median income	.66	.69
Median Income	.83	.88
For Families making....	The affordability index for renting**	
30% of median income	.54	.50
50% of median income	.90	.84
80% of median income	1.43	1.33
Median income	1.81	1.67

* For median-priced home

** For average two-bedroom apartment

Subsidized Housing

Owner-occupied. During the past five years, 13 families have taken advantage of the Maine State Housing Authority's First-Time Owners Program with low interest loans.

Rental Housing. Rural Development under the USDA subsidizes housing in a 20-unit building for the elderly located in Buckfield Village. Seventeen of those units are currently occupied, although only five are subsidized. In addition, there are four rental housing units subsidized by MSHA with Section 8 Vouchers

Housing Need

Maine State Housing provides an annual “Housing Need Summary”, which defines local housing need as “the difference between total subsidized or affordable housing units and Section 8 vouchers available, subtracted from the count of renters at 50% of Annual Median Income (AMI).” In Buckfield, the MSHA estimates that 21 affordable rental units are needed for 25 families below the AMI.

There does not appear to be a shortage of housing for the elderly in Buckfield. Many of Buckfield’s older residents own their own homes, and/or are eligible for State tax and rent refunds. The Maine State Housing Authority estimates a surplus of 15 subsidized rental units for seniors, available to those with incomes of less than 50% of the Annual Median Income.

Future Housing Demand

It has been projected that there will be a demand for approximately 900 year round housing units in the year 2016. The aging population and smaller family size will likely alter the mix of housing types.

Economy

Introduction

We felt strongly that we should begin by providing information about the current state of the economy in Buckfield based on data available at the time of this report. The following information is drawn from the 2000 U.S. census.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

	Number	Percent
Population 16 years and over	1,313	100.0
In labor force	973	74.1
Civilian labor force	968	73.7
Employed	943	71.8
Unemployed	25	1.9
Armed forces	5	0.4
Not in labor force	340	25.9
Females 16 years and older	663	100.0
In labor force	438	66.1
Civilian labor force	433	65.3
Employed	427	64.4
Own children under six years of age	121	100.0
All parents in family in labor force	66	54.5
Class of Worker		
Private wage and salary workers	733	77.7
Government workers	133	14.1
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	77	8.2
Unpaid family workers	-	-

As of 2000, there were 973 people age 16 or older who identified themselves as in the work force. Of those, all but 25 were employed. The unemployment rate in Buckfield was 1.9%. Women made up 45% of the total work force; and just under 1% of the women in the work force reported being unemployed. How did our friends and neighbors make their livings? Residents provided the following information in response to the census questions in 2000:

OCCUPATION BY INDUSTRY

	Number	Percent
Employed civilian population age 16 and over	943	100.0
Occupation		
Management, professional, related occupations	222	23.5
Service occupations	139	14.7
Sales and office occupations	193	20.5
Farming, fishing, forestry	36	3.8
Construction, extraction and maintenance	130	13.8
Production, transportation, material moving	223	23.6
Industry		
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	60	6.4
Construction	64	6.8
Manufacturing	191	20.3
Wholesale trade	39	4.1
Retail trade	107	11.3
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	45	4.8
Information	38	4.0
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	34	3/6
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	43	4.6
Education, health, social services	216	22.9
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food service	43	4.6
Other services (except public administration)	30	3.2
Public administration	33	3.5
Class of Worker		
Private wage and salary workers	733	77.7
Government workers	133	14.1
Self-employed workers in own non-incorporated business	77	8.2
Commuting to Work		
Car, truck, or van, drove alone	700	75.5
Car, truck, or van, car pooled	152	16.4
Public transportation (including taxi cab)	3	0.3
Walked	27	2.9
Other means	5	0.5
Worked at home	40	4.3
Mean travel time to work in minutes	27.9	n/a

This data indicates that many folks traveled away from their homes to earn their living – with the average commute time at nearly a half hour.

There are a number of businesses located in Buckfield. Our inventory as of the spring of 2005 identified the following:

Businesses located in Buckfield 2005

Ace Insulation, Inc.
Agape Acres, bicycle repair
Andrews Funeral Home
Back Forty Apartments
B.J. Realty
The Barn Laundromat
Bilkner Inc., William Holmes owner
Bly's Garage
Buckfield Housing Associates
Buckfield Inn
Buckfield Mall
Buckfield Post Office
Bob Cook Mill
Hill Rock Trailer Park
Dimaio Auto Company
Frechette's Sales and Service
Greenhouse Effect
Hart's Pizza
Neal King – formerly Maine Apple Growers
Libby Saw Shop
Lucas Equipment
R.E. Lowell Lumber Store
Thomas Machine
Maine Dowel
Marie's Pet Retreat
Massage Therapist – Karen Busch
McCafferty Meat Cutting
Midwest Tower Partners LLC
New Horizon Construction, Randy Smith owner
Nezinscot Village
NorthEast Bank
North Hill Riding School
Odd Fellow Theater
Oxford Networks
R & L Auto – Rick Vining
Pine Tree Campground

Loggers

Andy Bennett
Roland Bennett
Seth Bennett
Steve Bennett
Kendall Cooper
Jack Hackett
Levitt Martin
Frank Hodgson, Sr.
Dorson McCafferty
Norman McCafferty
Don Smallwood
Walter Warren
Steve Jack
Gary Bennett
Edwin Bennett
Tim Trundy

Industrial/Manufacturing

T.D.G. LLC (wood turning)
Fine Wood Products, Robert Misner
Island Elements
Maine Wood Artisans
Lobster Trap tables (Gary Belanger)
R.E. Lowell Saw Mill

Agricultural

L/P Ranch – Dick Piper
Wes Ackley Farm
Cooper Farm, Kendall Cooper
Bennett Farms, Gary Bennett
Perley Lovejoy Farm
Youngs' Dairy Farm
Lowell Orchards
Greenwood Orchards
Phil Trundy Farm
Warren Farm
Roundabout Farm Perennials, Phil and Sandy Trundy
Kevin Kimball Farm
Elsie/Kate Buck Farm
Robert Brown
Hill Rock Orchard
Buckfield Downs
Maple Crest Farm
Tony's Honey (Tony Bachelder)

Self-employed

Neal Austin – Austin Electric
Dave Hackett, building contractor
Gary Bennett, welder
Tim Brooks, building contractor
Gene Bell, building contractor
Ed Camolli, carpenter
Bernard “Porky” Dunn, carpenter
Bob Peer, building contractor
Randy Jones, propane technician
Ted Dunn, building contractor
Curtis McAlister, building contractor
Bob Downey, landscaping
Steve Bennett, excavator
Dennis McAlister, excavator
David Bradbury, Fencing
Skip Stanley, excavator
John Northrup, building contractor, bees
Steve Busch, Maine Masonry Stove, Inc.
Chris Hayward, excavator
Jim Wetherell, building contractor
Ron Beaudoin, building contractor
Kendall White, electrician
Leon Warren, rubbish removal
Gerard Gagnon, Ace Insulation
Mark Breitenfeld, carpenter
Perry Sherigan, carpenter
Wilbur Newton, carpenter
Bob Lipham, carpenter
Richard Henley, carpenter
Pete Powers, insulation

In-Home Retail

Compute This!, Jay Hanson
DJ Hair Repair, Diane Jeselskis
Lasting Impressions - Jennifer Lowell – hair dresser
Joan Abrams – hair dresser
Professional Sewing, Leanne Tupper, seamstress
Donna Warren, daycare
Douglass Towing, Skip Douglas
J&D Redemption Center, Jeannette and Dan Pinoski
JIT Auto Repair, Larry Keough
P&W Hydraulic Jack Repair, Phil Whitmore
Bessey Insurance Agency, Shelly Jamison
All Walks Under the Moon, Lisa Severy, Psychic

Stone Gun Shop
Jean Boutot Daycare
Streaked Mountain Archery, Ricky Kangas
Betty Sweetser, Daycare
Kelly Jordan, dog breeding and kennel
Kathy Dunn, Daycare
Sue Barker, Daycare

In-Home non-retail

Terry Hayes, Hayes & Associates (guardians ad litem)
Tony Bachelder, Body Works and Bee Pollinating Services
Stacey Raymond, speech therapist
Glen Holmes, Serenity Portraits
Jodi Bolduc, Streaked Mountain Transcription
Sarah Stocker, photographer
Charles Berg, PyreFlex
Mary Ann and Doug Arthur – Assisted Living
Steve Campbell, Campbell Safety

Artists/Artisans/Performers/craftsmen

Mike Miclon, performer
Pat Meader, Meader's Flowers and Baskets
Mike Raymond, artist
Jonathan Mess, artist and musician
Mike Menes, performer
Amanda Houtari, performer
Geoff Workman, artist
John Wiley, artist
Judy Bennett, artist
Mike Lovejoy, artist
Kevin Cooper, furniture craftsman
Leah Boyd Wolfsong, entertainer
David Compton, author
Robert Misner, fine wood products
Andy Bennett, author

We were surprised to learn that so many of our neighbors earned their livings locally and through self-employment. We were also impressed with the variety of professions and skills that our neighbors represent. Growing each existing business by one new position would be an economic boom for Buckfield and it would help insulate the local economy from vulnerability within any one particular industry. We believe that the town should adopt policies and implement strategies to support our existing businesses and to encourage their growth.

Public Facilities and Services

Introduction

It is important to assess Buckfield's public facilities and services to determine their capacity. These facilities services include: public water supply (owned and operated by the Buckfield Village Corporation), solid waste disposal, sewage/septic disposal, public safety, administrative facilities and schools (Buckfield is a part of School Administrative District 39).

Public Water Supply

The Buckfield Village Corporation owns and operates the public water system that serves the Buckfield Village area. In addition to residential users the Corporation also supplies many of the businesses in the Village. Fire protection in the Village is designed around the hydrants which the town rents from the Corporation.

North Pond is the source of Buckfield's public water supply. The pond, which is approximately 150 acres in size and at an elevation of 510 feet, is located approximately two miles north of the Village. One-third of the pond is located in Buckfield, the remainder is in Sumner. Most of the estimated 1,100 acre watershed lies within the Town of Sumner's boundaries and is almost entirely forested. The pond is contained by an earth and concrete dam at its mouth which has been reconstructed several times.

The Corporation maintains approximately 14,780 feet of service mains and 13,100 feet of supply lines, a large percentage of which are the original cast iron pipes laid in 1903. The Buckfield Village Corporation has over the last 10 years replaced a considerable amount of this old piping in the village. Just the age of these lines, particularly the supply line which runs from the dam to the village, is cause for concern. In addition, the system includes a 300,000 gallon standpipe added in the early 1960s and a chlorination station and flow recorder added in the mid-1970s. The Village Corporation added a filtration and pumping station in the mid 1990's as was required by the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. While good long-term records of water usage are somewhat marginal, the safe yield of North Pond is adequate to meet expected future demands.

An important note is that as this document is being drafted the Town is considering the possibility of taking over ownership of the Buckfield Village Corporation and creating a water department within the town structure. The Buckfield Village Corporation is heavily in debt and as a result of struggling to keep a full Board of Directors over the years feels that the town taking over is the best case scenario for the long term viability of the water system.

Solid Waste Disposal

In 1980 the Town of Buckfield entered into an agreement with the neighboring Town of Sumner to jointly develop a solid waste transfer station adjacent to the former Buckfield dump. The towns entered into an interlocal agreement to finance and operate the facility. The Town of Buckfield maintains ownership of the entire site.

The interlocal agreement provides for a buy-out of the facilities and equipment should the agreement be dissolved. For the past 10 years the two towns have worked well together, and no problems are anticipated in the future.

The facility consists of a transfer station, recycling center, and construction/demolition debris disposal site. The transfer station consists of a rear-loading compactor truck which is housed in a building which also houses the recycling operation. Waste is placed directly into the truck by residents using the facility. There are two 10 cubic yard green boxes for overflow. The recycling facility includes a small baler for newspaper and corrugated cardboard. Glass is collected in 55 gallon drums and is crushed by hand.

Buckfield is a member of the Mid-Maine Waste Action Corp. (MMWAC) which is quasi-municipal organization that burns municipal waste to create electricity. MMWAC processes over 200 ton per day at their energy recovery facility in Auburn. Previously, the City of Auburn had operated an energy recovery facility and towns such as Buckfield had contracted with the City for disposal of their solid waste. However, the facility had technical difficulties almost from its inception. When the facility could no longer handle the waste from Auburn and the contracted towns, it was decided to close the facility. The city and towns using the facility formed a non-profit corporation and construct a new facility. Buckfield and twelve other municipalities are members of the corporation which own and operate the new waste to energy plant. This has been the number one reason that Buckfield has been able to keep the cost of waste disposal under control. The member towns receive a considerable discount when hauling municipal solid waste to the MMWAC plant.

Sewage Disposal

Buckfield has no centralized sewage disposal system. Homeowners and businesses are responsible for their own sewage disposal which must comply with either the Department of Environmental Protection laws governing the discharge of sewage to surface waters or with the Department of Human Services rules governing subsurface disposal.

Of some concern are the private sewage disposal practices in the relatively densely built up section of Buckfield Village. There are several buildings in the downtown that are on extremely small lots which prevent the installation of septic systems that have the capacity required by the State of Maine Subsurface Disposal Rules. The exact fate of sewerage on those lots is questionable given the area's proximity to the Nezinscot River and the poor soils, which are characterized by a high water table and shallow depths to bedrock.

A 1985 study conducted by Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments for the purpose of applying for a Community Development Block Grant suggested that some of the systems in this area could have been discharging directly into the river or possibly leaching into the groundwater and flowing to the river.

Considering the existing information, the size and shape of the lots, and the land area covered by buildings, it may not be possible for each structure to have a suitable system on the same lot on which the structure is located. Therefore, it may be necessary to consider having sewage from buildings on extremely small lots pumped to a single lot to be treated or disposed of by a subsurface system.

Currently, Buckfield identifies the Lewiston / Auburn pollution control facility as a site for septage (waste pumped from septic tanks) disposal. The Lewiston/Auburn pollution Control Facility, which currently accepts Buckfield's septage, has been doing so for over 15 years. The town has no current plans to pursue other alternatives.

Public Safety

Buckfield is served by a fire department with about fifteen volunteers. The Chief is appointed by the Selectmen. Approximately 93% of its revenues comes from tax monies appropriated annually by the town. The remaining 7% comes from contributions and a contract with the town of Hartford. The central station houses two engines, a tanker a rescue vehicle with a forestry unit at the single bay station at North Buckfield. Approximately two thirds of the dwellings in town are within three miles of the central station.

While the firefighting equipment is in good to excellent condition, a new station will be required in the next decade to satisfy safety and health requirements. Increased regional cooperation and improved roads may lead to lowered costs in equipment requirements in the future. Buckfield has written mutual aid agreements with Turner, Hebron, Paris, Sumner, and Mechanic Falls. The agreements with Turner, Hebron, and Sumner provide for automatic response of those departments to any structure fire in Buckfield, and our department has the same responsibility to them.

The Oxford County Sheriff's Department is located in South Paris and the State Police Regional Headquarters is located in Gray. Buckfield has maintained an additional contract with the Oxford County Sheriff's Department over the last few years for additional coverage. This is an hourly rate contract that allows the town manager to designate certain patrol times as he sees fit through out the year.

Buckfield maintains a rescue department made up of volunteers and two full time employees, providing the town with emergency medical services. Funds for the operation of the rescue department are derived from town appropriations, and billing revenue. Currently the rescue department along with an ambulance is housed within the fire station. The closest full service hospital is Steven's Memorial Hospital located about 12 miles away in Norway.

Two hospitals, Central Maine Medical Center and St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, are in Lewiston about 20 miles away.

Public Buildings and Land

In July of 1991 Buckfield opened the doors of its newly renovated town office located in the former Elementary School used most recently as the Junior High School. This two story building has approximately 5,000 square feet of usable space. The first floor houses the administrative offices and the second floor houses the Superintendent's office for School Administrative District #39.

The Town also owns several community buildings including the Zadoc Long Free Library, Fire Station, Old Highway Garage and the New Highway Garage. The Town currently owns the former Maine Waste Oil site which, after abandonment in 1982, was found to contain hazardous wastes. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection removed the sludge from the site. The site is not considered as hazardous but some contamination may still exist. The Zadoc Long Free Library has approximately 10,000 volumes with circulation of some 1800 in 2005. Visits to the library have reportedly increased recently, particularly that of children.

General Administrative and Service Facilities

The Town's general administrative and service facilities are situated on Turner Street in Buckfield Village. Local government is administered by a Town Manager who, appointed by a three member board of selectmen, functions in an array of official duties including Road Commissioner and Code Enforcement Officer. The Town Clerk is also appointed by the selectmen and serves as Town Clerk, Treasurer and Office Clerk.

The Town's highway department is managed by the Town Manager who is the appointed Road Commissioner. The highway garage is a new two-bay steel structure located on John Ellingwood Road. The highway department is responsible for summer and winter maintenance of all town-owned roads, and for winter maintenance only on State routes 124 and 140. The crew consists of one Road Foreman, one full-time man and one part-time man on call for winter plowing.

**Municipal-Owned Highway and Fire Equipment
2006**

Vehicle #	Year/Description	Condition
1	2005, GMC Plow & hopper sander	excellent/very good
2	2005, GMC Plow & hopper sander	excellent/very good
3	1995, Chevy Kodiak Plow & hopper sander	excellent/very good
4	1999, GMC 1-Ton Dump with plow	Very good
5	1989, Chevy K2500 Pick-up truck	Very good
6	1985, International Wheeler	Good
7	Power Screen & Stacker	Good
8	1986, Case Backhoe	Good
9	1988, John Deere Loader	Good
10	1979, Caterpillar Loader	Good
11	1972, Wabco Grader	Good
12	1979, Int'l Trash Compactor	Good
13	2004, Smeal Fire Engine	Excellent
14	1979, Ford Fire Engine	Good
15	1979, Ford Fire Engine (Forrest Truck)	Good
16	1982, GMC Fire Tanker	Good
17	1965, Army Surplus 2 1/2 ton Utility	Good
18	1995 GMC Ambulance	Very good
19	Portable DC Welder	Good
20		

Education

Buckfield is a member of the School Administrative District 39 along with neighboring Sumner and Hartford. Students in grades kindergarten through sixth attend the Hartford/Sumner Elementary School located on route 219 in Sumner. Grades 7 – 12 attend the Buckfield Junior/Senior High School on Route 140 in Buckfield.

Total school enrollment in the District has decreased over the last ten years. The most significant reduction within the District was in grades kindergarten through sixth.

Students also have the option of attending Vocational Technical classes through the District's involvement with region #11.

Currently an ad hoc committee has been formed to look into the best way to continue to provide quality education to our students.

Social Services

The Town's residents are served by a number of social service agencies that provide special services in time of need to the elderly and low-income. Many of these agencies are supported by local tax dollars. Social service agencies providing assistance to residents of Buckfield include the following:

American Red Cross:

- disaster preparedness, child care training, and youth development

Androscoggin Home Health Services:

- home care services for those who are unable to pay for such care

Combat:

- consumer education and assistance services

Community Concepts, Inc.:

- energy assistance, weatherization and home repair, transportation, outreach, Headstart and day care

Rape Education & Crisis Hotline:

- 24-hour hotline, medical, legal, support and advocacy services

Rural Action Ministry:

- housing repair/rehabilitation, food bank, adolescent pregnancy program, energy shelter

Child Health Center:

- Cornerstone Education Program, Parent Place Program, Development Education Clinic, Oxford Hills Summer Day Camp

The Progress Center:

- day programming and work adjustment training for physically and mentally challenged adults

Tri-County Mental Health Services:

- treatment services for mental illness and emotional problems

Tri-County Family Services:

- family services to low-income women

Western Area Agency on Aging:

- various services to the elderly including financial; material; legal; congregate meals; health; and outreach

Western Maine Transportation:

- free or subsidized transportation for those who are not so fortunate or who have special needs

Outdoor Recreation Resources

Buckfield's natural resources encourage varied recreation. However, at present access to land and water for recreational activities depends largely on continuing landowner cooperation. Both the town and non-government organizations need to consider methods for encouraging public access where appropriate.

Local snowmobilers have set one model for planning and stewardship of land use. The Streaked Mountaineers Snowmobile Club has worked with landowners for more than three decades to design and maintain more than 35 miles of trails, including a length of ITS 89 and ITS 32. ITS 89 follows the old railroad bed between Hebron and Sumner, crossing through the center of the village.

With the breakup of the former United Timber lands the town was able to buy the railroad bed in 2002. It now functions as a multi-use recreational trail. It allows access to South Pond below the village and runs close to the east branch of the Nezinscot River above the village. Swimming was once taught at South Pond. As an important life safety skill, perhaps a program could be reorganized.

Several discontinued or abandoned town roads, most notably in the Streaked Mountain/Owl's Head area and in the northwest corner of town, provide a chance to enjoy relatively undeveloped woodland. However, there is no public easement over many of these.

A walking path is in the process of being developed on town property behind the municipal center. Here people will be able to enjoy a woodland walk by the river without dodging vehicle traffic. The town may wish to consider developing other trails devoted entirely to travel on foot or horseback.

The Nezinscot River may be the recreational resource townspeople most ignore. People come from out of state to canoe and kayak here, fishermen seek trout from it, and the Beginning with Habitat mapping recognizes its ecological value. Yet generally we ignore it. Three years ago a cleanup was organized for the entire run between Buckfield Village and Turner, and many tons of trash were hauled out by dozens of volunteers. This effort raised awareness of the value of the river. If a public "put-in" area with parking could be developed, and if the quality of the river corridor can be maintained, the Nezinscot can enrich our life and boost our economy.

Route 117 continues to be a popular bicycle trip. Buckfield might become a destination, if overnight accommodation were developed and publicized.

There has not been a significant loss of hunting access due to posting in the last ten years. However strip development along town roads has reduced hunting territory. A single new house can create seven acres of safety zone.

The Recreation Committee is working with the Selectmen to consolidate and enlarge the ball fields and play ground in the village. These fields are oriented to youth programs. In the future the town may wish to consider activities such as tennis which appeal to both youths and adults.

FISCAL CAPACITY

Introduction

As Buckfield has developed and grown, so too have the demands for municipal services and facilities in part due to state and federal mandates. As the Town further develops, these demands will undoubtedly continue to increase--specifically, for new or improved roads, public facilities, public services and operational/administrative costs.

During the ongoing comprehensive planning process (including any future capital improvement programming process) various recommendations requiring public investment will be made. These recommendations must take into consideration Buckfield's ability to pay or finance them. This chapter analyzes the Town's fiscal capacity; that is, its ability to meet future needs through public expenditures.

Revenues

Buckfield's largest source of revenue is from property taxes. The following table indicates trends in the Town's assessed valuation, projected property tax revenue and mil rate for the five years.

**Property Tax Revenues
Buckfield, 2000-01 thru 2004-05**

Year	Assessed Valuation (\$)	Projected Property Tax Revenue (\$)	Mil Rate
2000-01	57,868,895.00	1,066,089	18.30
2001-02	57,817,450.00	1,136,112	19.65
2002-03	59,128,490.00	1,147,003	19.40
2003-04	61,233,960.00	1,230,584	20.10
2004-05	67,114,223.00	1,290,110	19.25

Source: Buckfield's Annual Town Reports

Between 2000 and 2004, the Town's assessed valuation increased by \$9,245,328 or an average of \$1,849,065 annually. It is expected that in 2005-06, the valuation will increase significantly due to the revaluation of land values. A strong national as well as regional housing market has been the major factor in the increase in Buckfield's valuation over the five year period.

During this five year period, property tax revenues increased by approximately \$224,021 or 54%. This translates to an annual average increase of nearly 11%. The largest increase between any two years occurred in 2002-03 and 2003-04 with a \$83,531 increase.

Based upon the level of revenue from sources other than property taxes and expected expenditures, the mil rate is set. Since 2000-01, Buckfield's mil rate has increased from 18.3 mils to 19.25 mils. Expenditures have increased over the period and valuations have not been adequately adjusted and other sources of revenues have decreased creating the increase in the mil rate.

Other Sources of Revenues

Major reoccurring sources of revenues for Buckfield include excise tax, state revenue sharing and the Urban Rural Initiative Program (URIP). In addition, the Town has several interest bearing trusts that are used for various purposes. The Town has and may receive state and federal grants for various projects.

The next table shows the major sources of revenue for the period 2000-01 - 2004-05. Excise taxes increased by \$46,360 (22%) over the period. The smaller growth between 2003-04 and 2004-05 can be attributed to the State's slowing economy, higher gas prices and fewer new car sales.

Significant Source of Revenues Town of Buckfield 2000-01 - 2004-05

Year	Excise Tax	Revenue Sharing	Property Tax	URIP	TOTAL
2000-01	211,054	149,768	1,066,089	55,212	1,426,911
2001-02	223,493	135,429	1,136,112	55,206	1,550,240
2002-03	230,991	135,481	1,147,003	55,148	1,568,823
2003-04	256,075	146,839	1,230,584	55,128	1,688,626
2004-05	257,414	149,071	1,290,110	55,180	1,751,775

Source: Buckfield Town Reports

Expenditures

In 2004-05, the largest expenditure for the Town was Buckfield's share of the School Administrative District #39 budget (\$877,244). Since 2000-01, Buckfield's appropriation to the school district has increased 26%. At the same time, local spending increased by \$45,271 or 12%. During the same period, the County tax increased by 40% or \$16,780.

During the planning period, it is expected that expenditures will have to increase to keep pace with inflation, state and federal mandates and the public's demand for improved and/or expanded public services. Although it is difficult to accurately project expenditures for Buckfield in the year 2016 a simple 8% annual increase in school costs would raise this appropriation to some 1.89 million dollars and general operation and maintenance to \$930,000

Significant Items of Expenditures Buckfield

Year	Local	Education	County Tax	TOTAL
2000-01	385,607	694,813	40,669	1,121,089
2001-02	387,244	772,016	44,588	1,203,848
2002-03	372,295	795,985	51,390	1,219,670
2003-04	376,948	874,537	53,641	1,305,126
2004-05	430,878	877,244	57,448	1,365,570

Source: Tax Commitment Records

Debt

A Town's total outstanding debt is limited by State law to 15 percent of the Town's last full State valuation. This limit is reduced to 7 1/2 percent if the debt for schools, sewer and airport, water and special district purposes are excluded.

Buckfield's 2006 State valuation was \$87,900,000. The debt limit of 7 1/2 percent as set by State law would allow Buckfield to have a debt of \$6,592,500 for projects other than schools, sewer and water, and special district purposes. With an outstanding debt of \$839,093 Buckfield is approximately 0.9% of its State valuation; thus the Town still has significant borrowing power.

Fiscal Capacity

Buckfield's fiscal capacity in relation to state-established debts limits is good. However, because of the reliance upon the residential property tax as its major tax source of revenue, the Town needs to consider the ability of residential property owners to pay for debt service.

The Town's fiscal capacity is such that, if necessary, the Town can borrow to finance major capital expenditures. The Town has the following debt.

Town Debt and Borrowing Capacity

LOAN DESCRIPTION	LOAN MATURITY DATE	PRINCIPAL DUE AT 6/30/2006	INTEREST DUE AT 6/30/2006	TOTAL DEBT AT 6/30/2006
Municipal Center Renovation	July 32, 2011	\$106,741.62	\$ 10,037.98	\$ 116,779.60
Maine Waste Oil Demolition	June 30,2008	\$ 9,126.50	\$ 689.78	\$ 9,816.28
Water Line Extension	June 30,2008	\$ 4,823.34	\$ 364.30	\$ 5,187.64
MMWAC Debt	June 30,2015	\$478,405.00	\$148,180.96	\$ 626,585.96
New Highway Garage Project	June 30,2008	\$ 38,737.72	\$ 1,295.78	\$ 40,033.50
New Fire Truck	Sept. 1, 2007	\$ 40,513.79	\$ 730.28	\$ 41,244.07
Municipal Center Landscaping Project	June 30,2010	\$ 79,515.31	\$ 7,101.56	\$ 86,616.87
New Plow Trucks	June 30,2010	\$ 81,229.33	\$ 6,427.73	\$ 87,657.06
TOTALS		\$839,092.61	\$174,828.37	\$1,013,920.98

Allowable Debt	\$ 6,592,500.00
Principal Debt at 6/30/2006	\$ 839,082.61
Borrowing Power	<u>\$ 5,753,417.39</u>

T ransportation

Introduction

Buckfield's transportation system is in the State and local highway system. Although Buckfield was once served by rail, only the right-of-way, which runs in a north/south direction though the center of Buckfield remains.

Traditionally, the maintenance of a town's road system has been second only to education in the amount of tax dollars expended annually. Buckfield has approximately 39.34 miles of public roadway, the State maintains 12.8 miles of road in Buckfield.

The Town's major roads, Route 117, 124 and 140 are State roads. The level of service of these roads is high, with significant excess capacity available. However, due to the grades on Route

117 between Buckfield Village and Paris, heavy truck traffic can cause traffic to slow down and back up.

The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) has functionally classified highways as arterial, collector or local. A brief definition as used by the MDOT of the three classifications is:

Arterial Highways: These are the most important travel routes in the State. They carry high speed, long distance traffic and attract a significant amount of federal funding. They usually carry interstate or U.S. route number designations.

Collector Highways: These routes collect and distribute traffic from and to the arterial routes, serving places of lower population densities and somewhat removed from main travel routes.

Local Highways: All highways not in the arterial or collector classification. They serve primarily for service to adjacent land areas and usually carry low volumes of traffic.

Based upon the MDO classification system, Buckfield contains 0.00 miles of arterial highway, 12.85 miles of collector highways and 43.37 miles of local highways. Collector highways are Route 117, Route 124 and Route 140. Annual average daily traffic volume on Route 117 is approximately 3,200, Route 124 approximately 1,300 and Route 140 approximately 1,900.

Motor Vehicle Accident Data

The Maine Department of Transportation maintains accident reports of all reportable accidents (\$1000 damage or personal injury). A report entitled "Maine Accident Record Summary" provides summarized data relating to the location and nature of accidents. One element of the summary report is the identification of a "Critical Rate Factor" (a statistical comparison to similar locations in the State). A critical rate factor greater than 1.00 should cause concern because it indicates a potentially high accident location. Based upon the information provided by the MDOT, there were no crash locations that had a critical rate factor greater than 1.00 in Buckfield during the 2001-2003 period.

Members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee assessed in April 1991
History of Roads
as written by Fred Greenwood and Kenneth Cooper

Roads

Road construction and maintenance has been an important function of the Town government since the early settlers worked with the proprietors of the Town in the late 1790's. As part of a road report, we need to determine where the funds come from for maintenance and construction.

The early roads were laid out in various widths by agreement of two or more people across the land of the people concerned. These might take form of bridle paths or wider travel areas to accommodate wagons and carts. These roads were maintained by the early settlers.

The road from Lowell's Corner crossed the Irish Bridge through to Chase's Mills and Turner before the Roundabout Bridge and road were built and laid out. Irish Bridge crossed the Nezinscot River just south of the junction of Jersey Bog Brook with the river.

In 1794 the Town of Buckfield voted to make all town roads 3 rods in breadth. This was the beginning of present day road layout. Most roads in Town were laid out in the next 30 years. On areas already settled, roads were likely to be laid out on one side or the other of existing property lines and, in areas not yet settled, the roads might be laid out with the center line following a town or range line.

After measuring at least two old roads in many places, we found a variance between 46' and 51' between walls. County roads are described as being 4 rods (66') wide. County roads were laid out from the Paris Line through Buckfield Mills and Federal Four Corners to Turner Line, and from Hebron Town Line over South and North Hills through Buckfield Village up High Street and the back road to Sumner to the town line in 1800. Later a new county road was laid out over the general course of 117. Alterations have been made on several sharp corners.

From 1800 to 1840, the roads in Town were laid out in a rather systematic way to make most areas accessible and/or to connect the present settlers one with another. For nearly 100 years, this system stayed intact with minor changes.

After 1800, the Town took an increasing role in financing roads and bridges and, by the 1840's, the amount raised had reached \$4,000 or more. This was a large amount when we note that good houses were being built for around \$1,000. The Town raised road funds at town meetings into the 1900's, when the automobile excise tax amount came along. Gradually, just a part of this tax was appropriated for roads until the 1950s when all excise tax money was allocated for roads. Many of us felt tax money collected from cars and trucks should be used to improve the road system.

About 1950, the State started the Town Road Improvement Fund, which was designed to widen and place gravel on rural roads so people could travel during mud season. This yearly allocation started at around \$1,800 and a few years later was doubled. This allocation was based on town road mileage. Road funds remained rather constant for a number of years; then the State turned some roads that had been State-aid roads back to the Town for maintenance. During the late 1980s and 1990s, funds from excise taxes jumped due to a lot of new cars and trucks purchased

by townspeople; also the State per mile subsidy increased-\$1,200 per mile now. The State recently changed the way this money could be spent. All must now be spent on capital improvement of roads.

One road problem in Buckfield is "old or so called discontinued roads". In the early years, several paths of travel that were replaced by a town-voted road system were discontinued and no longer used.

Many roads and parts of roads were voted for discontinuance on the 30s, 40s and 50s. It appears that Maine statutes designed for this purpose were not followed in most cases.

In 1939 the first "modern times" road was discontinued by vote of Town Meeting. This was the Town Farm Road which lies easterly from Jordan's Corner past the Old Town Farm to the Turner Town Line. It was voted to discontinue maintenance but to retain the right-of-way. This is the course of action that should have been followed on other roads. In the 1930s and 1940s, several other roads or parts of roads were voted on-some several times - often not following the State Statutes in these actions.

Regardless of the legality of these votes, a varied history goes with each road. The special books on roads at the Town Office have good information on the history of some roads but for complete and detailed information one must go to the original town and/or state records.

The road from North Buckfield Road towards North Pond was laid out by legislature at the time of the "Spaulding set off" as a private road for A. Spaulding in 1898, the town voted to lay out a town road on the location of the private road. In 1899 the Town voted to rescind the vote of the previous year. In the 1940s, the town voted to discontinue this road that the Town never laid out. The public has used this road since 1900 or before. If the Faunce Road in Buckfield is a town road, does this make the Spaulding Road, based on use, a Town road?

We have made detailed searches on the Cummings Road, the Prince School Road, the Gershum Road and gained some information on several others. The conclusion made is that tax policy, abutters rights, public rights, town obligation and further planning along these old roads is shady to gray. Roads have always been an important part in the development and growth if this Town and, with schools under a separate entity, the roads should be the number one concern.

Comments on existing roads are as follows:

In general, as of 2006, the condition of Town roads have been maintained in the past 3 years. The town has not been able to keep up with the past road program where 3-5 miles of road were being paved or resurfaced each year, we have continued to work on increased drainage, ditching and brush removal. The goal of this program was to lower the long term cost of maintaining our roads. The town fully intends to reestablish this program to more aggressively maintain our roads that will in the long term save the town money.

Over time the traffic within and through the Village area has increased greatly. Much of this traffic increase is from large trucks and commuters that travel in all kinds of weather and often above posted speeds. Poor sidewalks and the lack of sidewalks in many areas are a safety issue that needs to be addressed. Due to a long over due rebuild of Route 117 the sidewalks through the village should be upgraded and extended by the summer of 2008.

Public Transportation

Public transportation is provided through Pine Tree Transit/Western Maine Transportation and Community Concepts Inc. Currently Pine Tree provides a Wednesday free ride to shopping centers. If you are on Medicaid, rides for medical care can be made by appointment through either service. All other rides - for medical, shopping etc. - can be arranged through both services at a cost of 0.69 cents per mile. With a future pointing to more commuters and an aging population there is a need for public transportation at an affordable price.

Natural Resources

Introduction

The natural resource base of a community plays an important role in overall community quality of life and development. Natural resources can enhance or limit the quality of life and the growth potential of a community and are significant factors in planning a community's future. Natural resources include bedrock, soils, vegetation, surface and ground water, wetlands, and the wildlife which inhabits these other resources. All of these elements have contributed to the economy of the town through agriculture, wood harvesting with associated manufacturing, mining, power generation, hunting, and outdoor recreation.

During the first half of the 19th century most of the forest in Buckfield was cleared for agriculture. While there was very little really good farmland, the poorer soils and steep slopes were used for pasturing sheep and cattle. As land eroded and better agricultural opportunities became available in western states, the marginal land was allowed to revert to forest.

While the role of agriculture in Buckfield's economy has declined since the Civil War, the remaining farming endeavors enrich the lives of all within town. The lands kept open through farming provide the views we enjoy daily, habitat for wildlife dependent on grassland and brush, and recreational opportunities for both townspeople and tourists. Many of us still buy products from these farms, and escalating energy costs and the growth of niche markets may increase the economic importance of our agricultural land in the future.

Our forest lands provide employment and raw products to local and regional processors and manufacturers. They help protect our air and water quality and provide critical habitat to

wildlife. They provide recreation to outdoorsmen of many types. They give spiritual nourishment to most of us. Together with our farmland they create the rural landscape most of us treasure.

Our wetlands and ponds, and our river and small streams provide special wildlife habitat and recreational and scenic environments.

We may become increasingly aware of the indirect economic value of all our natural resources. B&B's in Oxford County are multiplying. The Nezinscot River is attracting more use. Bicycle tourists utilize the challenge and beauty of Route 117's passage over Streaked Mountain. Recreational trails are multiplying.

Land use patterns are quickly changing. If we do not plan to protect our natural resources we may find them greatly diminished in quality within our lifetime.

Topography

Topography relates to the general land form of an area. Knowledge of the topographic characteristics of a community is important because of its influence on agriculture, development, views and aesthetics.

There are two factors that are important when topography is considered – relief and slope. Relief is elevation above sea level. It identifies significant or dominant physical features that form natural barriers that hinder development or valley corridors that permit easy access. Slope, on the other hand, measures the amount of rise or fall in feet for a given horizontal distance. It is a significant land form aspect which presents various limitations to development and other land use activities. As slopes become steeper, construction is more expensive, roads and services are more difficult and expensive to construct and maintain, and the potential for environmental degradation increases.

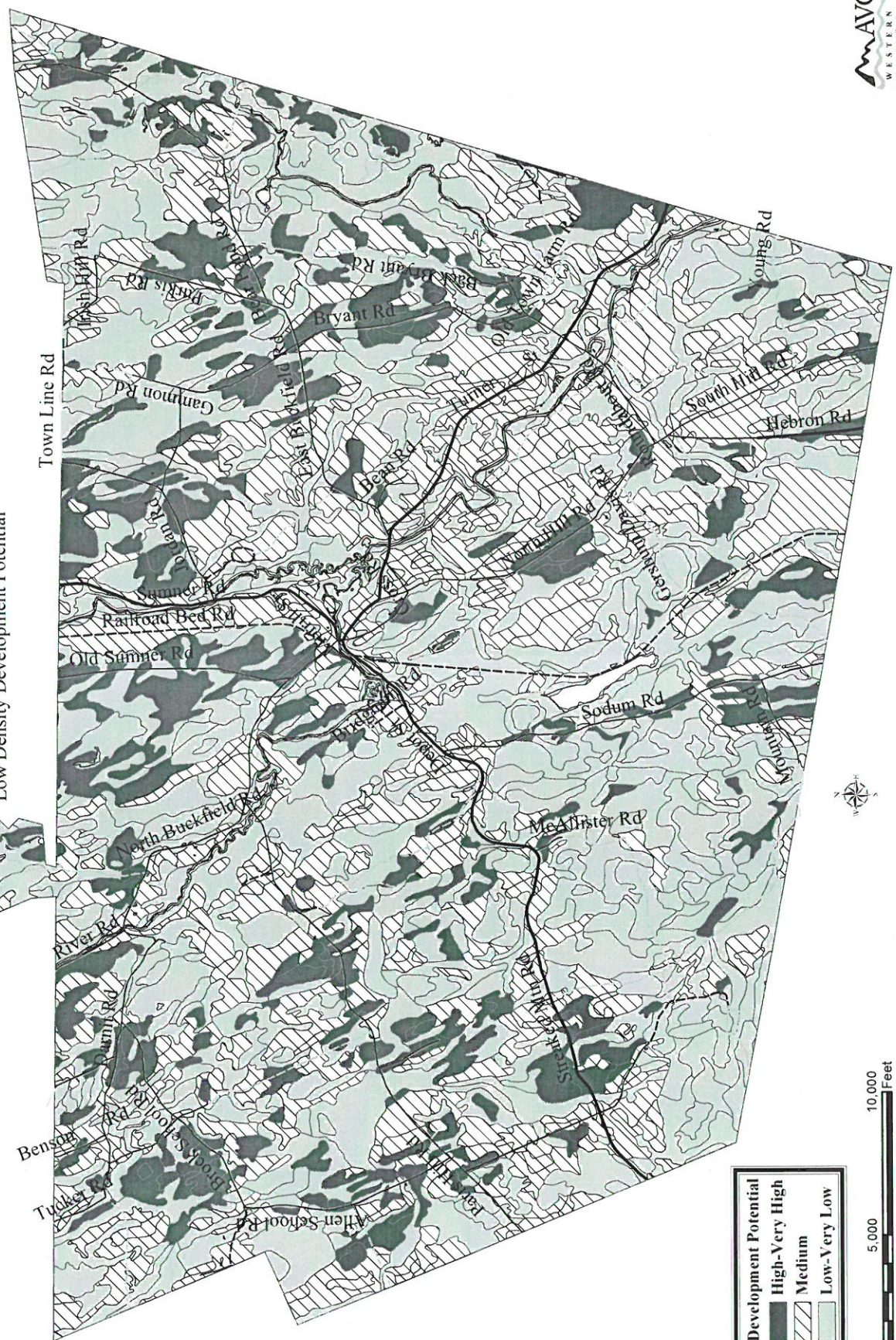
Buckfield's general topographic characteristics include a broad plain along the Nezinscot River and a smaller plain along the East Branch of the Nezinscot River. From the Nezinscot River westward, the land is of rolling topography with major elevations at Streaked Mountain, Owls Head, Turner Hill and Hammond Ledge. East of the Nezinscot, the narrow plain of the East Branch of the Nezinscot River has erratic slopes and maximum elevations of 1,000 feet less than in the western portions. Jersey Bog, a major wetland area, covers a portion of east-central Buckfield.

The highest point above sea level in Buckfield is Streaked Mountain (1,770 feet). Other locations of significant elevations include Owls Head (1,386 feet), Oak Hill (1,381 feet), Turner Hill (1,180 feet), Hammond Ledge (1,012 feet), Whitman Hill (730 feet), North Hill (684 feet), South Hill (640 feet), and Irish Hill (623 feet).

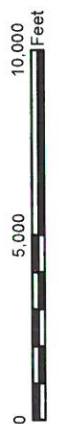
The lowest elevation above sea level is where the Nezinscot River flows into Turner at approximately 310 feet. Local relief or the difference in elevation between the highest and lowest points, therefore, is approximately 1,460 feet.

Buckfield, Maine

Low Density Development Potential



Development Potential	
	High-Very High
	Medium
	Low-Very Low



Slopes of greater than 15 percent cover 30 percent of the land area in Buckfield. Significant areas of slope greater than 15 percent are in south-western Buckfield, near Streaked Mountain and Owls Head, south-central Buckfield, in the vicinity of North Hill, and in east-central Buckfield.

Wetlands

Wetlands are important natural resources because they store large amounts of water and help to reduce flooding, and they provide habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna. Destruction of wetlands can significantly increase flood levels; reduce flora and fauna habitat and adversely affect ground water supplies.

The Maine Geological Survey has identified 14 non-forested freshwater wetland areas greater than 10 acres within Buckfield. The largest of these wetlands are associated with Jersey Bog and Bog Brook. Of the 14 mapped wetlands, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has rated 6 of these as being of high or moderate value as waterfowl habitat. All 14 wetlands and the area within 250 feet of their upland edge are regulated by the Town's Shoreland Zoning Regulations.

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service mapped Buckfield's wetlands using high altitude photography. This technique identifies wetlands as small as one acre in size, both forested and non-forested. It also indicates wetlands considered primarily Palestrine and Riverine.

Ground Water

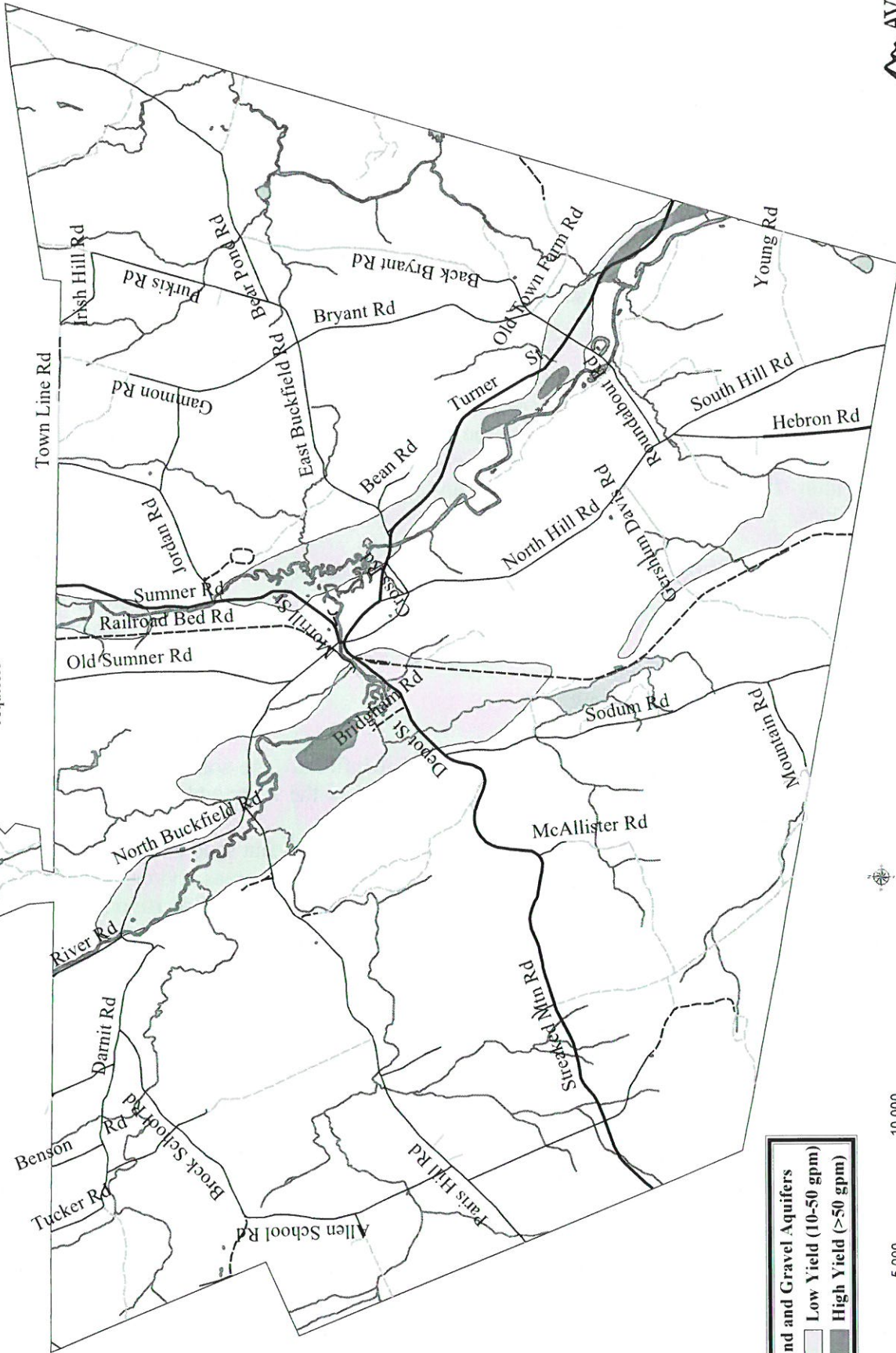
Ground water is water derived from precipitation that infiltrates the soil, percolates downward and fills the numerous, tiny spaces in the soil and rock below the water table.

The Maine Geological Survey has mapped the location of significant sand and gravel aquifers in Buckfield. They are, for the most part, located in the floodplain areas and/or in undeveloped areas. A major low-yield aquifer, capable of producing wells with a yield of 10 to 50 gallons per minute, is associated with the Nezinscot River and its two contributing branches. As mapped, the aquifer does not encompass the Buckfield Village area, even though the river flows through the Village. The former Maine Waste Oil storage site, a major pollution source, is located on the fringe of the aquifer. Two small areas between Buckfield Village and the Roundabout Road (Route 124) have been identified as high-yield aquifers, producing wells that yield 50 gallons per minute or more.

Most of the private, individual wells in Maine are drilled into bedrock. The wells penetrate through water-bearing cracks or fractures in the bedrock and are called bedrock aquifers. Most domestic wells penetrate relatively small fractures and, therefore, only produce small amounts of water.

Buckfield, Maine

Aquifers



Unlike sand and gravel aquifers, bedrock aquifers have not had extensive mapping. The Maine Geological Survey water-well data base contains 30 entries for bedrock wells in Buckfield. Although this information does not provide sufficient information to map bedrock aquifers, some characteristics of the wells are worthy of note. Bedrock wells reported ranged from 50 feet to 425 feet deep with an average depth of 237 feet. Yields in gallons per minute ranged from a low of 0.50 gpm to 50 gpm. The average was 9 gpm. Based upon this limited data, an adequate quantity water supply for single-family use from bedrock well is possible in Buckfield.

Surface Water Resources

Watersheds

The land area that contributes water to a particular stream, river, pond or lake is known as its watershed. Watershed boundaries are determined by connecting points of highest elevation around a body of water – that is, all the land within a given watershed drains to the body of water, and all the land outside that watershed drains somewhere else. Rain and snowfall within the watershed eventually flow by way of surface runoff, streams and groundwater to the lake, pond or river which is the lowest point in the watershed.

The major drainage systems in Buckfield are the East and West Branches of the Nezinscot River which converge, just southeast of Buckfield Village to form the Nezinscot River. Buckfield also has all or portions of watersheds for four Great Ponds, including North Pond (the largest), South Pond, Mud Pond in Buckfield and Mud Pond in Turner.

Development in a watershed has recently been recognized as instrumental in the degradation of many lakes throughout the State. Of particular concern is the amount and impact of phosphorus entering the lake from its [sic] drainage area. Phosphorus is a naturally-occurring nutrient which, in excess, can result in algae blooms and oxygen depletion of the lake. Road building and maintenance and housing construction are major contributors of phosphorus because they expose soil to erosion and create impervious surfaces that allow runoff. Erosion prevention and drainage management techniques should be employed when undertaking development in any watershed. Watershed planning dovetails with comprehensive planning and is particularly important when a lake is a valuable resource for the town or region.

Waterbodies

North Pond serves as a public drinking water supply managed by the Buckfield Village Corporation. Only the southern half of the pond and less than 10% of its watershed is actually located in Buckfield. The remainder is located in Sumner. The watershed remains mostly forested and is experiencing little development. However, a significant portion of its Sumner watershed has been heavily harvested in the last fifteen years.

North Pond has a surface area of 156 acres. It has a maximum depth of about 50 feet, and an average depth of 17 feet. The total watershed area for the lake measures 1.72 sq. miles, and the

direct watershed measures 1.64 sq. miles (the direct watershed excludes the drainage area from Cushman Pond).

The lake has a natural flushing rate of 0.75 times/year, which means that it takes this lake about 1.3 years for the water in the lake to be completely exchanged. North Pond is suitable for both warm and cold water fisheries, although the amount of habitat available for coldwater species is limited by a significant, oxygen loss that occurs during the late summer.

Water quality data for North Pond are somewhat limited. A report published by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (2004) shows that the lake has been monitored on a periodic basis since 1982. No definitive water quality trends have been identified from the historical data. North Pond currently exhibits above average water clarity, an important indicator of lake health. However, recent data suggest that the lake may be somewhat less clear than it was a decade ago, and depressed late summer oxygen concentrations indicate signs of stress, suggesting that the condition of this body of water could be in a precarious state of balance.

Water clarity is significantly above the average for Maine lakes, and total phosphorus and chlorophyll-concentrations are relatively low in North Pond. However, the severe oxygen depletion is a controlling factor in the recycling of phosphorus from the bottom sediments to the surface, where it may be metabolized by algae. This phenomenon can cause the rapid degradation of lake water quality, under certain circumstances.

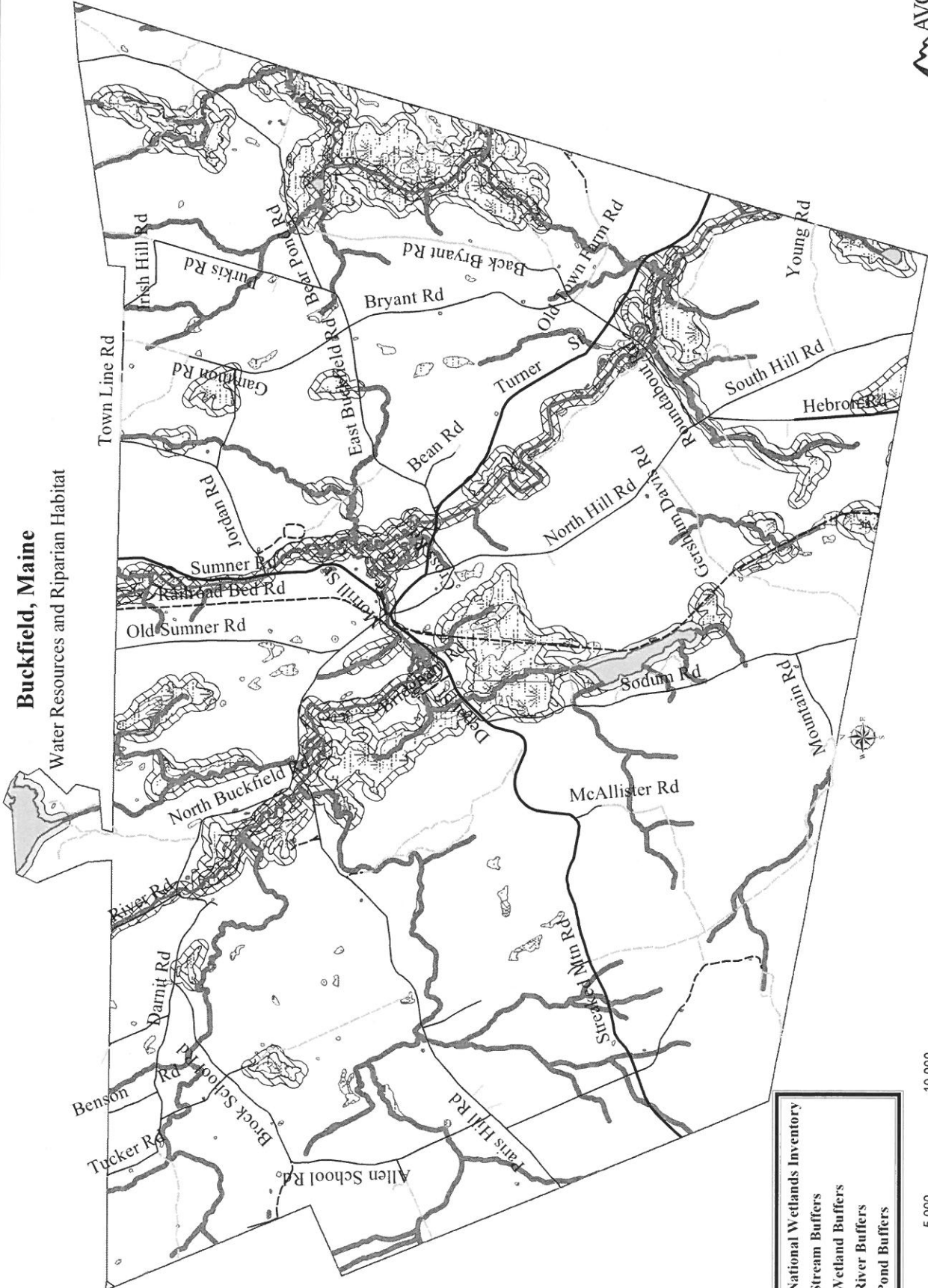
The documented, persistent loss of oxygen in the deepest areas of the lake during late summer (August-September) should be taken as an indication of vulnerability to the effects of watershed development. The Maine DEP has established lake water quality categories for determining phosphorus control standards, based on existing data for individual bodies of water. Even though North Pond water quality is considered to be above average in some respects, it has been assigned the "Moderate-Sensitive" rating as a result of summer oxygen depletion. Lakes with this rating are afforded a higher level of protection when new development is proposed within the watershed.

North Pond is a high value waterbody. Any decline in water quality could have significant and widespread implications. The lake is a source of drinking water. Clear, clean sources of water are less costly to treat, and there are generally fewer problems associated with disinfection byproducts. North Pond presently supports a coldwater fishery (Brook Trout). However, late summer habitat for this species is limited by oxygen depression/depletion. Additional oxygen loss could result in the loss of trout, and a shift to warm water species.

South Pond and its watershed are located entirely in Buckfield. The pond is approximately 32 acres in size with a maximum depth of 11 feet. Although accessible via the old railroad bed, the area around South Pond has remained, for the most part, undeveloped. This shallow pond is inhabited by warm water fish species. Its watershed consists of steep slopes that are mostly located to the west around Owls Head.

Buckfield, Maine

Water Resources and Riparian Habitat



National Wetlands Inventory

- Stream Buffers
- Wetland Buffers
- River Buffers
- Pond Buffers



Mud Pond is located in the southeastern corner of the town. The pond itself lies entirely within Buckfield's boundaries, as does some 48% of its watershed. The pond is approximately 10 acres in size, and remains undeveloped and relatively inaccessible.

The East Branch of the Nezinscot River converges with the West Branch southwest of Buckfield Village. From that point, the Nezinscot flows through Buckfield and Turner to meet the Androscoggin River at Keene's Mills. From its source in Peru to where it joins the West Branch, the East Branch drains 55.8 square miles of primarily undeveloped forest land. The West Branch drains 43.3 square miles from its beginning at Shagg Pond in the Town of Woodstock. Its drainage area is primarily forested. In total the Nezinscot River system drains 180 square miles.

The Nezinscot Rivers are classified as Class B under the State Classification of Fresh Surface Water System. The 1982 Maine Rivers Study cited the river system for several unique or significant river resources. These included critical/ecological, undeveloped corridors, scenic values and inland fisheries. Portions of the rivers are valued by canoeists for their canoeability and scenery. In recent years, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has undertaken an aggressive stocking program of both Brown and Brook Trout in certain stretches of the system. Local citizens have participated in two days of cleanup activities in 2002 and 2003 hauling tons of trash from the river between Buckfield Village and Turner Center.

There are also a number of streams and brooks that drain Buckfield. They include the following:

Darnit Brook	Swan Pond Brook
Basin Falls Brook	Bog Brook
Drew Brook	

Floodplains

A floodplain is the flat expanse of land along a river or shoreline that is covered by water during a flood. Under the Federal Insurance Program, the 100 year floodplain is called the flood hazard area. The Federal Emergency Management Agency published in September 1992 a Flood Insurance Study for the Town of Buckfield. The study reports that flooding in the Nezinscot River basin generally occurs in the spring months from rapid runoff caused by heavy rains combined with snowmelt. Less frequently, flooding occurs later in the year as a result of hurricanes. Minor flooding occurs almost annually.

The most notable floods on the Nezinscot River occurred in March of 1936, March of 1953 and April of 1987. The peak discharge of the 1936 flood was estimated to be 9,430 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the dam in Turner, 2.4 miles upstream of the USGS gauge in Turner Center. The 1953 flood had a peak discharge of 13,900 cfs at Turner Center and a recurrence interval of slightly greater than 100 years. The 1987 flood had a peak discharge of 11,600 cfs at the Turner Center gauge and a recurrence interval of slightly greater than 50 years. There are no available records of damage caused by these floods in the study area. The West Branch Nezinscot River,

the East Branch Nezinscot River and the Nezinscot River have extensive floodplains extending more than 1,500 feet from the normal water level in numerous locations.

Wildlife Habitat

Although there are many types of habitat important to numerous species, four are considered critical: wetlands, riparian areas, major watercourses, and deer wintering areas.

Buckfield's wetland areas, woodlands, and farmlands provide outstanding wildlife habitats. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife prepared in February, 2005, a map of Plant and Wildlife Habitat of Statewide Significance. The map identifies 9 existing or potential Deer Wintering Areas (DWAs) and 7 inland waterfowl/ wading bird habitat areas. The latter habitat areas are non forested wetlands or the edges of shallow ponds. The four largest are associated with South Pond and Drew Brook/Jersey Bog.

Most streams flowing through forests have sections of high value habitat as mapped for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife service. The forested areas that stand out most prominently are South Pond outlet, Drew Brook, and Bog Brook. Then perhaps the West Branch of the Nezinscot together with Basin Brook and the Darnit show the most prominence. Swan Pond outlet brook, the wetlands south of North Pond and those below Roundabout Road all stand out on the mapping.

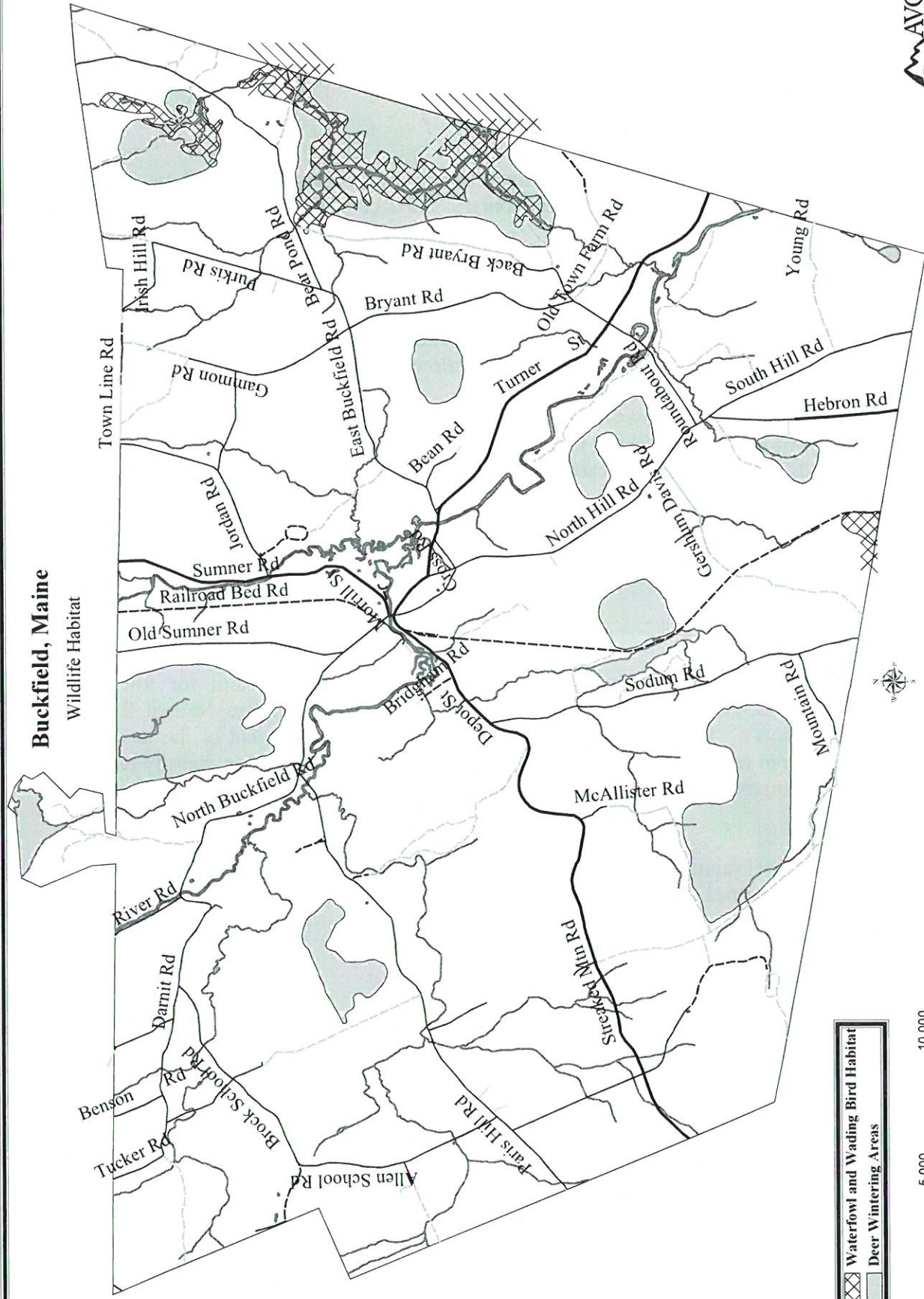
Soils

Soils are extremely important to community development. Roads, buildings, sewage and waste disposal all depend upon soil quality. A Soil potential rating system for low density development has been developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service. Based upon this system, approximately 50 percent of the land area in Buckfield has been rated as having a "low" to "very low" potential for low density residential development. Primary factors for this rating are excessive slope and wetness.

"Medium" potential ratings comprise some 40 percent of the Town and only 10 percent of the land area was determined to have a "high" to "very high" rating.

Buckfield, Maine

Wildlife Habitat

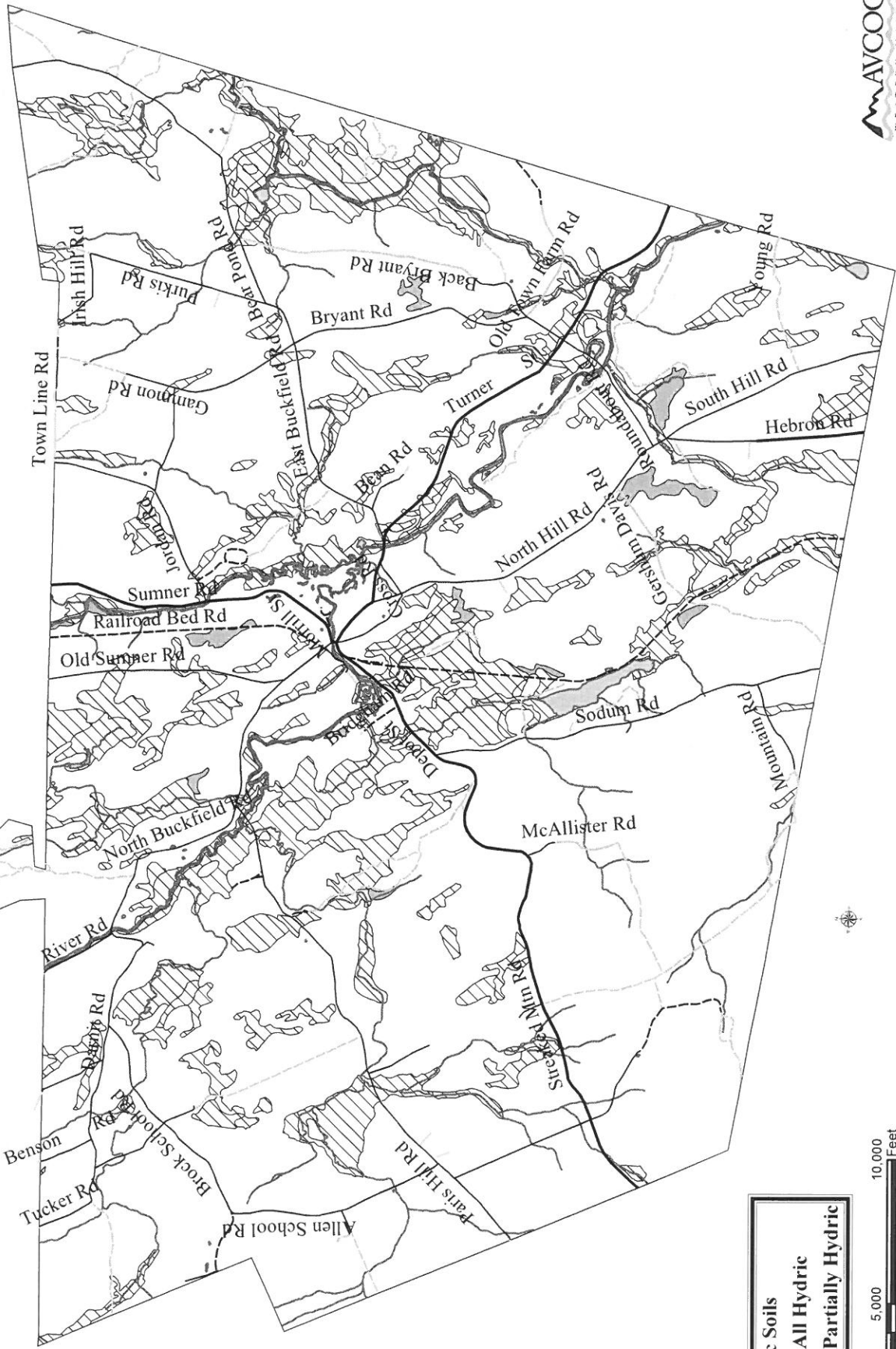


 Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat
 Deer Wintering Areas



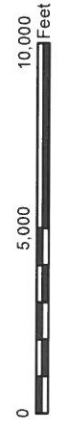
Buckfield, Maine

Hydric Soils



Hydric Soils

- All Hydric
- Partially Hydric



Agriculture

Introduction

A large group of Buckfield farmers met in 2004 and 2005 to collect information on current farm operations and to comment on the role and health of agriculture in Buckfield and in Maine. They submitted the following statement as a summary of the support the Comprehensive Plan should bring to farming.

“Farming is one of Buckfield’s oldest traditional industries; it is important not only to the local economy but the state’s economy and identity as well. Ever since the first settlers came to Buckfield, they have been tilling the soil and raising livestock. It is their legacy that is continued by local farmers today.

The acreage today is used for open space and recreation as well as farming. These farms also provide food, adding to our economy. Most of Buckfield’s farms are family farms. Their production and success influences the local community and the quality of life. Buckfield’s rural landscapes also contribute to the non-farm neighbors. Small farms continued existence is important to a small community like ours. Small farms are also vital in producing crops, such as lumber and wood and wood for heat, that consumers have come to depend on.

Farmers are already dealing with hardships; we must do all we can to keep the farmers financially viable and producing the crops that so many depend on. We rely on our local farmers to bring us fresh produce, eggs, milk, and meat, continuing on the farming tradition. Denying them help would cause even greater economic hardship and potential ruin, in which we will all lose.

We as a community pledge to do everything in our power to allow for the continuation of the agricultural uses of the land in Buckfield. We want to work with the land owners to protect their rights to continue on the farming tradition. We want to work with the land owners to protect their rights to continue farming as well as not infringing on their rights in the future to develop the land as would be in accordance with good community planning.”

Current Conditions

This statement reflects the stressful climate in which Maine’s farmers operate and a long history of a declining farm economy in Buckfield. Dairy farming and apple farming have seen dramatic change in recent decades. In 1950 there were about twenty farmers in Buckfield who were shipping milk. (Champ Hanson, who hauled milk at that time, made this estimate for the 1980 Comprehensive Plan) In 1975 nine farming operations still shipped milk from Buckfield. They were: Bennett Brothers, G. Briggs, E. Buck, P. Buck, Greenwoods, M. Jack, Trundys, Warrens,

Youngs. Now only Peter Young sells milk, and Oxford County's dairy producers may be counted on two hands. Apple growing in Buckfield and Maine is in competition with global production.

Service industries supporting agriculture have dwindled as farmers have gone out of business. There are fewer farm equipment dealers and farm supply stores in the area than there were in 1975, and there are fewer processors. In Buckfield we have lost Bessey Foods and Maine Apple Growers.

But there were some notes of hope within the farmers' comments on current economic conditions. It was pointed out that our country's present agricultural industry relies on cheap transportation based on cheap fuel. As energy and transportation costs grow in the coming decades, local agriculture may grow more important again. In addition more people are paying attention to food quality. There is more interest in where and how food is produced. Already in parts of Maine citizens are becoming shareholders in local produce operations. Super markets are stocking more organic products. Some meat producers are shifting to "natural" and certified organic operations. There is an associated growth in interest in farm related tourism. Farm bed and breakfast operations are already located in Oxford County towns.

Some numbers related to farming in Buckfield may be most heartening. There are at least 30 Buckfield families involved in farm operations, and statistics from the State of Maine for 2002 showed 60 residents employed in agriculture or forestry. Approximately 50 families own land that is farmed.

The inventory assembled by the farmers' group shows at least 20 families raise livestock. Seventeen harvest hay. There are still three apple growers tending orchards in town, and half a dozen raise berries. Three families sell nursery stock. One runs a pollination service and sells honey. At least two growers sell a variety of produce directly from stands during the summer. There are a handful of people producing firewood, and several other farmers work in the woods in winter. These operations bring direct economic benefits to Buckfield, but the town also realizes indirect economic benefits from farms. Snowmobile and ski trails and a great deal of hunting territory depend on the open land of these farmers and landowners. Bicycle, canoe, and walking routes would be far less interesting if they were not punctuated with fields and pastures.

The United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has classified 1,208 acres or just 5% of the land in Buckfield as "prime farmland soils." The agency describes these soils as having "all of the natural characteristics that make them ideal for agricultural uses, all other things [such as rainfall and climate] being equal." NRCS classifies another 2,836 acres or 12% of Buckfield as being "farmlands of statewide importance." These "are very similar to prime farmland soils and can be just as productive, but [they] have one or more characteristics that don't quite meet the criteria set for prime. These could be areas that are more sloping, droughtier, slightly wetter, and somewhat more erodible." [footnote to attribute quote to David Wilkinson, NRCS]

Many of these acres listed as possessing prime or statewide significance for agriculture have been turned to residential or commercial use. That means they are essentially permanently lost to agricultural use. Other land so listed may have reverted to woodland. We do not have a figure on how much of the most valuable land is still open to agricultural production, but the acreage is significantly less than that shown in the figures above.

A look at the USDA soil maps reveals that there are significant areas of existing productive farmland that are not listed in the valuable agricultural categories above. These include the “bottom” lands along the Nezinscot and its tributaries. They are classed as “hydric soils.” These are generally “poorly and very poorly drained soils that are saturated for long periods of time and can and will support hydrophytic vegetation.” Many of these lands are in a floodplain. Most of the land so classed is protected from development by the soil characteristics. Some of these lands are beautiful and very productive haylands.

There are also many other fields and pastures scattered through Buckfield, which are not shown as important on USDA soil mapping, but which are important to their owners’ operations, habitat diversity, and the town’s scenic character. These lands may rate just as high for Buckfield in public value as those lands recognized by NRCS.

Rare, Endangered, and Significant Natural Features

Jersey Bog/Drew Brook

Jersey Bog is a wetland complex with associated uplands. It is set in block of 4,249 acres shared mostly by Buckfield and Turner with a very small portion in Hartford. This land is bounded in Buckfield by Route 117, Bryant Road, East Buckfield Road, and Bear Pond Road. Its wetlands are both forested and open. There are fens, maple swamps, northern white cedar swamps with some old growth, and two small ponds. Drew Brook and Blanchard Stream converge to join Bog Brook, which wanders through three miles of open landscape.

There is a globally rare plant species recorded here, listed as threatened in the state. Beyond that distinction the size and diversity of soils, vegetation, and wildlife mark this land as an exceptional natural area. Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) has mapped about a third of Buckfield’s portion of this area as a winter deer yard and a quarter as inland water fowl/ wading bird habitat. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has defined substantial areas of non-forested and forested wet land here as “most important habitat.”

Adjacent to this area, but separated from it by Bear Pond Road, is an even larger habitat block of 7,298 acres, mostly within Hartford. The major portion of the Jersey Bog watershed is located here. In the Buckfield portion (roughly a thousand acres) is more deer yard and wading bird habitat around Drew Brook. There is working farmland and residential development only on the

fringe of this area, and there is a two mile section of Bear Pond Road with no electrical service. Except for the Purkis Road there has not been much development at this side of town.

The Nature Conservancy owns a significant parcel off the Purkis Road giving some protection to Drew Brook and Bog Brook north of Bear Pond Road. Androscoggin Land Trust holds a conservation easement on land along Drew Brook on both sides of Bear pond Road as well as land in the Blanchard Stream area in Turner. Much of the wetlands and Drew Brook are under Shoreland Zoning.

South Pond/ Owls Head/ Streaked Complex

The South Pond area contains one of just six sites in the state with a current listing for the presence of a rare fern, Ebony Spleenwort listed as “threatened” by the state. But, like Jersey Bog, this area is significant for several features. The size of the habitat block and its relationship to a much larger block together with diversity of features are key to its importance.

The total habitat block is calculated by MDIFW to be 2,998 acres, most of which is in Buckfield. It is as narrow as a mile, but it stretches south by more than four miles. It is bounded by Route 117, North Hill Road, Route 124, Hebron Station Road, and the Sodom Road.

Within this landscape USFWS has classed much wetland and forest as “most important.” Included is a hundred acre red maple-sensitive fern swamp near Route 117, through which runs the South Pond outlet. Also included in this high value category is much of the edge of South Pond and nearby ledges, which have remnant mature forest where logging was not allowed or was too difficult. A small cedar swamp and the Bog Brook fen crossing the town line into Hebron also are rated “most important.” Many of the areas listed above are included in MDIFW inland waterfowl/ wading bird habitat. A deer wintering area is mapped by that department on upland softwood forest to the east of South Pond. In addition there are vernal pools and small wetlands scattered through the low land which are important features.

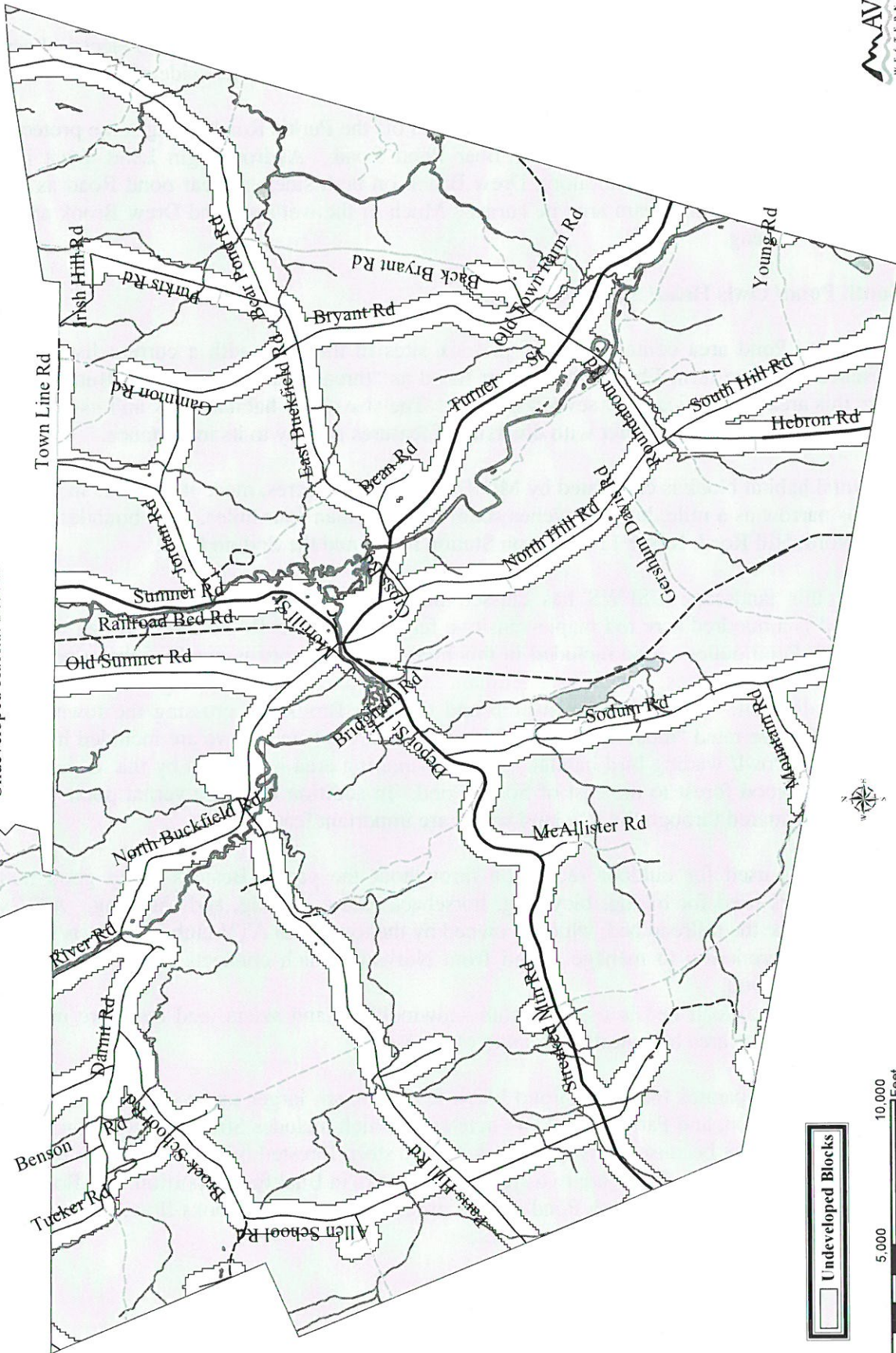
This area is used for outdoor recreation throughout the year. Besides being good hunting territory, it is used for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, fishing, and canoeing. ATV's are allowed to use the railroad bed, which is owned by the town. An ATV club from Paris is seeking landowner permission to manage a trail from Norway, which connects with the railroad bed below South Pond.

In winter the railroad bed is used by both snowmobilers and skiers, and there are maintained trails crossing the area both north and south of the Pond.

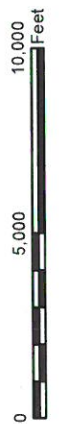
Sodom Road separates the South Pond block from a much larger undeveloped area shared by Buckfield, Hebron, and Paris. The 8,544 acre area, which includes Streaked Mountain and Owls Head, is important because of its size. It is mostly steep forested hillside. MDIFW has a large deeryard mapped here. There are two significant brooks in Buckfield's portion, one flowing into Hebron and the other into South Pond. There are several seasonal brooks flowing into the pond and small wetlands scattered through the forest.

Buckfield, Maine

Undeveloped Habitat Blocks



Undeveloped Blocks



This hilly forestland is important to maintaining water quality in South Pond, as almost all of the pond's watershed is located on the steep slopes of Owls Head. Substandard forestry practices or ill-conceived development can have a negative effect on the pond and other downstream features.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) owns parcels of land in both the South Pond area and the Owls Head/Streaked area. The TNC noted in 2001 that there are "less than a dozen roadless blocks larger than 5,000 acres between the higher foothills and the coast."

A very large portion of the forest here has been heavily harvested in the past two decades, and some large parcels have been broken into smaller parcels. However, there are few holdings less than forty acres. There is potential for maintaining a large and rich forest system.

Scenic Resources

Buckfield's rolling topography creates numerous scenic areas and views. A scenic view analysis conducted as an element of the comprehensive plan identified 32 scenic views. The analysis employed three variables and assigned a value of one to three to each variable. The three variables are defined as follows:

1. Distance of Vista or View Shed: This valuable considers how long a distance a vista can be viewed. It assumes that a view or vista which is blocked only a few feet from the observer has relatively lesser value than a view that can be seen for miles.
2. Uniqueness: Although not always impressive, the features in the landscape which are rare contribute "something special" to that landscape.
3. Accessibility: A given scenery has lesser importance if there is no public access to it or access is difficult.

A scale of one to three was used to score each variable with one being the lowest and three the highest. The criterion was as follows:

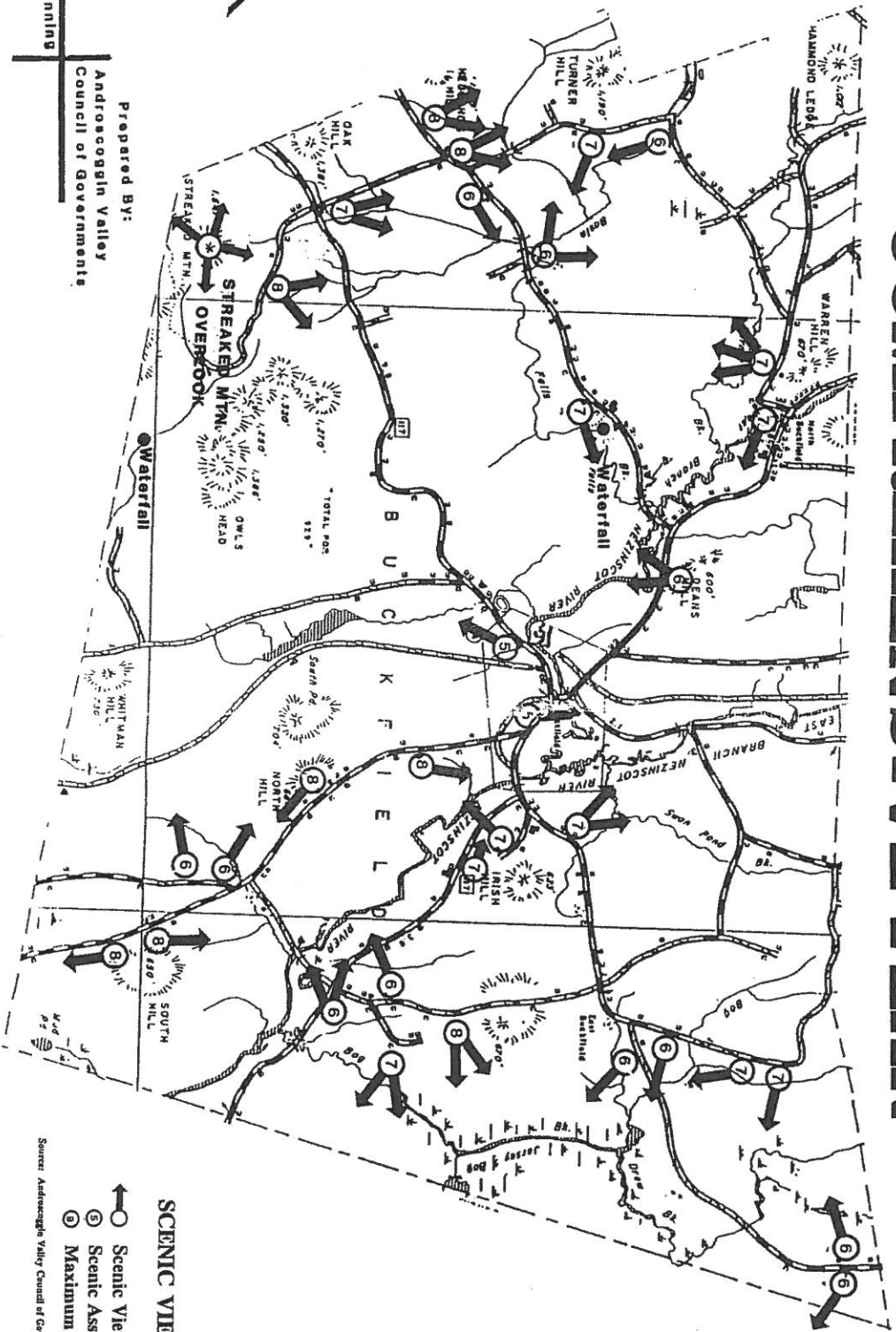
Distance of vista: 1 point - immediate foreground
 2 points - up to one mile
 3 points - more than one mile

Uniqueness: 1 point - contains no unique qualities
 2 points - contains some characteristic
 3 points - contains impressive/unique qualities such as White
 Mountains, views of water, etc.

Accessibility: 1 point - access difficult such as along "path" or trail
 2 points - access via public road
 3 points - access via scenic turnout or similar area

Scenic views are primarily located in northeast Buckfield looking east and south, North and South Hill and in western Buckfield looking north and east

BUCKFIELD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



SCENIC VIEW ASSESSMENT

- ➔ Scenic View Direction
- ⑤ Scenic Assessment Value
- ⑥ Maximum Assessment Value

Source: Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments

Prepared By:
Androscoggin Valley
Council of Governments

Source:
Comprehensive Planning
Program

LAND USE PATTERNS

Introduction

A major element of the Comprehensive Plan is the analysis of the use of land and of existing development patterns to help in understanding community functions, spatial relationships, past and current priorities and future directions. Current land use patterns and expected future development trends are cornerstones in the planning of policies and strategies that will shape Buckfield's land utilization.

Buckfield has a total land area of 36 square miles (23,075 acres) and is ranked 25th in land area among the organized towns of Oxford County.

Forested Land

Forests or woodlands cover the majority of land in the town (approximately 19,000 acres). There are numerous small fields which are reverting to woodland due to the abandonment of agricultural activities. Major tracts of woodland are found in south-western and north-eastern Buckfield. It is estimated that 8,000 acres of forestland are under active management. Landowners have placed 4,860 acres of woodland (in 68 parcels) under the Tree Growth Tax Law. This represents approximately 26% of the forested area of Buckfield. Hardwood and mixed stands comprise most of the woodland under Tree Growth, 2,245 and 2,094 acres respectively. Softwood stands accounted for only 521 acres.

In 2000 the former United Timber lands in Buckfield were sold to several logging companies. In the following years these lands were resold after they were heavily harvested. These properties represented 3,390 acres of land enrolled in Tree Growth. All of this land has been resold to approximately a dozen owners. About 1/3 of the resold property was removed from Tree Growth. At this time less than two percent has been or is being converted to other uses. About forty acres near the village is in the process of subdivision.

Agricultural Land Use

A land use analysis in 1991 revealed that the number of acres devoted to active agriculture in Buckfield had greatly decreased in the preceding fifteen years. In the fifteen years since there has not been dramatic shrinkage. However, two years ago twenty-eight acres of cropland adjacent to the village were approved for residential subdivision and another subdivision is being planned on a field of similar size.

Probably only a bit more than 10 percent of Buckfield's land is actively farmed, but the compilation of farming activities in the Agriculture section of this volume, shows surprising vitality.

Apple growing may be the most economically significant agricultural activity in Buckfield. Currently about 225 acres are devoted to apple production. The major orchards are located on North Hill and South Hill and off Paris Hill Road in the west side of town.

Hay production and pasturing of livestock use by far the most farm land and those parcels are scattered over most of the town. These lands give us our views, remind us of our history, provide critical wildlife habitat, and help define who we are.

Residential Land Use

The 2000 Census reported 693 year-round dwelling units in Buckfield up from 614 in 1990 and 463 in 1980. The estimate of total units in 2005 is 790, a 14% increase for the five-year period. More than nine out of ten residential dwellings (year-round and seasonal) are located on individual lots rather than in multi-family structures. Buckfield's residential development pattern can be separated into two categories: village and scattered.

Village residential is concentrated in Buckfield Village. Approximately 150 residential structures are located in the village with only 20% of them constructed after World War II. Individual lot sizes range from 4,330 square feet to more than 3 acres, with most in the 20,000 square foot range. Frontages provide for the compact village appearance and range from 50 feet to more than 300 square feet. However, frontages between 120 feet and 160 feet are most common. Most of Buckfield's rental units are located here.

A second and much smaller concentration of pre-1950 residential structures is found in North Buckfield Village. Twenty homes are located here.

Scattered residential development adjacent to town roads accounts for nearly 80% of the town's residential structures. Although the rural landscape of Buckfield has always contained isolated or scattered residences, this pattern has intensified since the 1970's. About 300 new single family dwellings have been constructed or placed adjacent to existing public roads since 1980. These have been the result of individual lot sales primarily, rather than of subdivisions. Areas that have seen considerable growth are Hebron Station Road, most roads in East Buckfield,

Route 117, Paris Hill Road and Darnit Road. Only in the last few years have subdivision roads been constructed.

Commercial Land Use

While Buckfield contains many small businesses, land devoted strictly to commercial use is minimal.

Buckfield Village is the historic and current commercial center of town. Tilton's Market and Northeast Bank anchor the intersection of Route 140 with Route 117, and several other businesses are within walking distance in the village. Other businesses are scattered throughout the town.

Industrial/Manufacturing Land Use

Industrial and manufacturing land use is found primarily in or immediately adjacent to Buckfield Village. The largest facilities in operation are R.E. Lowell on North Hill Road and Wells Wood Turning on Route 117.

Institutional Land Use

The major areas of institutional use are Buckfield High School located on Route 140 just north of Buckfield Village and the Municipal Center, fire station, library, and U.S. Post Office located within a 1,000 foot stretch of Route 117 (Turner Street) in the village.

Village Land Use

Buckfield Village has the characteristic of the traditional New England village. Nineteenth century architecture predominates, and residential styles run from center-chimney cape through classic revival and gothic to 1920's bungalows and post WWII "ranches." While some 19th century commercial buildings have been lost to fire or decay, several still exist on Depot Street with a few still housing commercial services. One large home on Turner Street houses a B&B and restaurant, and another contains a laundromat, office space, and apartments. Half a dozen homes and a factory have been converted to apartment buildings. In addition to the institutional buildings noted above the Community Church, the Masonic Hall, The Union Meeting House all contribute to the town culture. The former Odd Fellows Hall has "put Buckfield on the map" in its transformation into a theater.

Although the town lost its commercial square at the junction of routes 117 and 140 to bridge and road redesign in the 1970's, the recently completed landscaping at the municipal center places the town's office and fire station and the church around a traditional public green. The expanded parking provided by this project helps solve parking problems for those buildings and the nearby playing field and businesses.

North Buckfield Village is now residential. Neither three-phase power nor The Village Corporation water supply serves this area. Nineteenth century architecture predominates and the former Grange Hall has been saved as a residence and studio.

Undeveloped Land

Land that is not utilized for agriculture, residential, commercial, manufacturing/industrial or institutional land use is classed as “undeveloped.” This land may be in forest or commercial woodlots or open wetlands. About 19,000 acres of the town are included in this classification. Significant blocks of this land are in the Owls Head/Streaked Mountain area and the Drew Brook/Jersey Bog area. These areas and other important habitat areas are discussed in the natural resource sections of this plan.

