

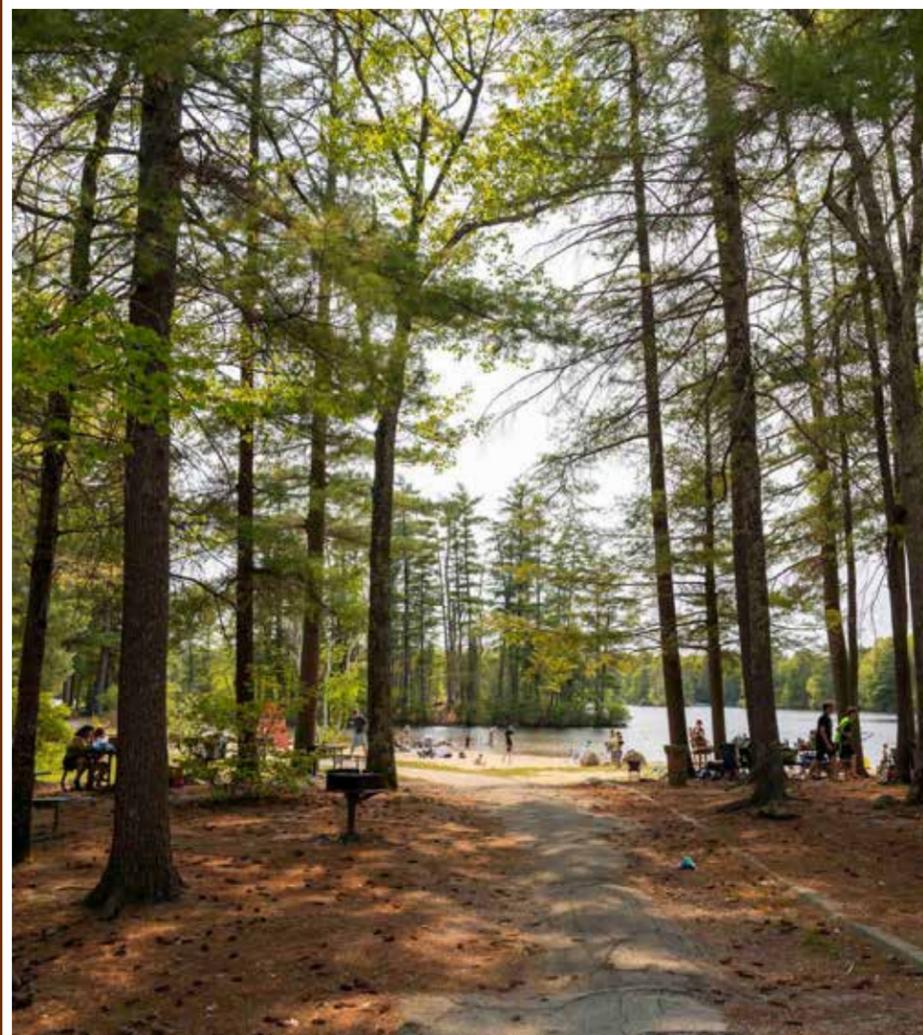
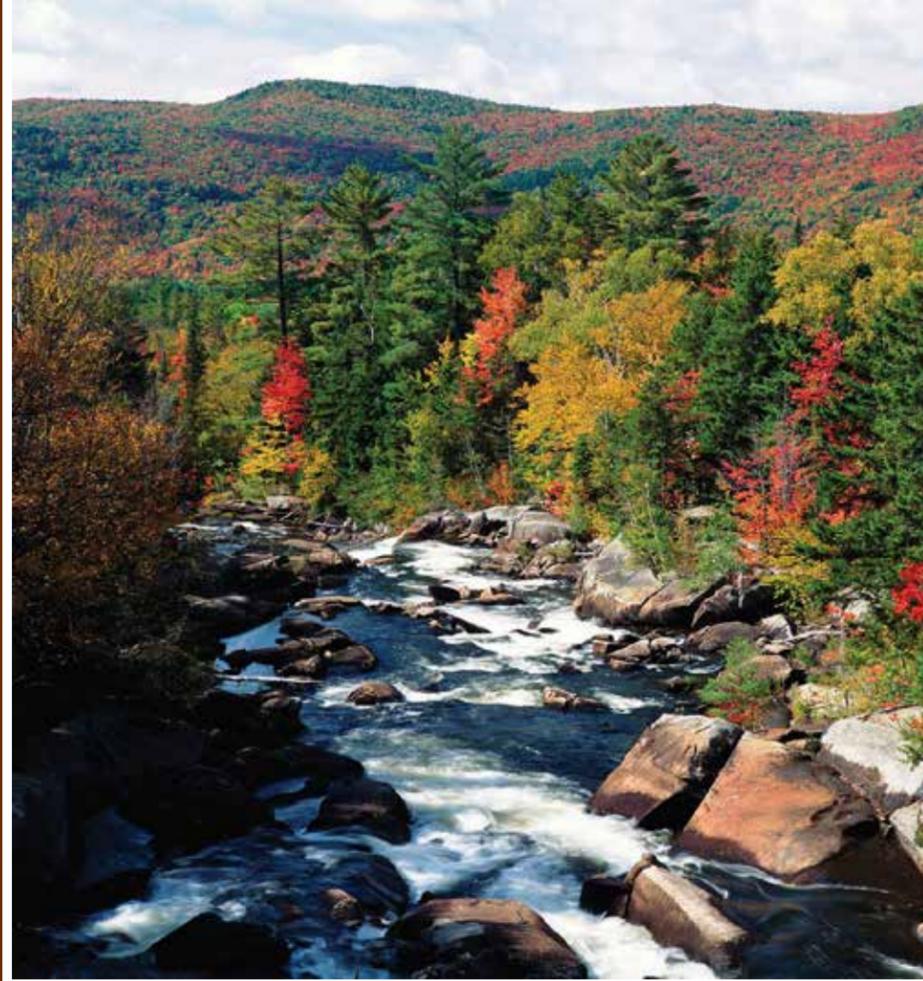


New Hampshire
State Parks

CAMPGROUND EXPANSION FEASIBILITY STUDY

2022

PREPARED BY:



A. INTRODUCTION

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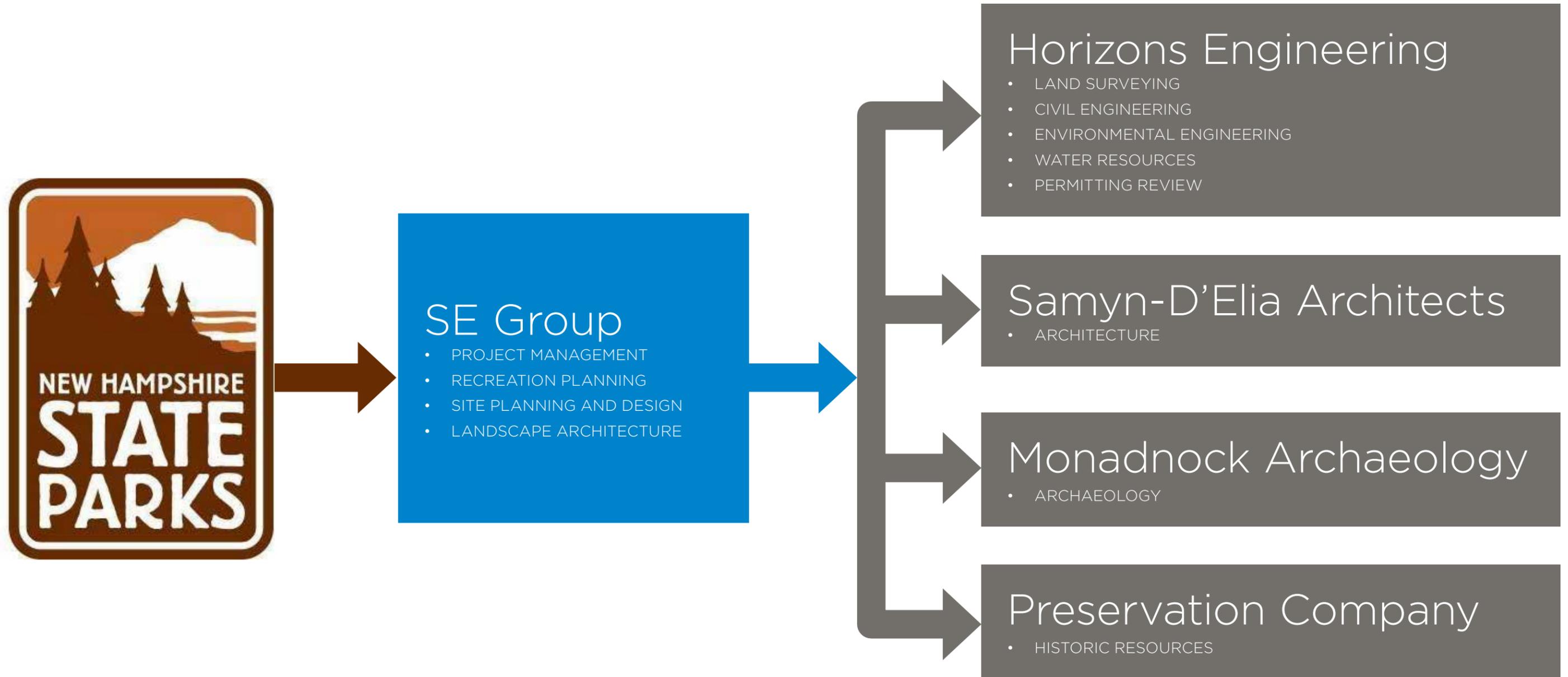
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TEAM OVERVIEW AND ROLES



PROCESS

PHASE 1 Feasibility Studies



- Overall guidance and strategic approach for Phase 1 Feasibility
- Individual campground kickoff meetings
- Data collection: GIS data, surveys, previous plans and studies, State Park websites, maps, etc.
- Develop base maps and desktop review

Site Visit

- Field review of expansion areas
- Site, infrastructure, and building assessment
- Conversations with park supervisor/staff
- Archaeological Resources Assessment
- Review with client team

Design Options

- Preliminary site plan studies/options
- Preliminary building concepts
- Review with client team

- Resource mapping as needed (natural, cultural, historic)
- Additional site surveying (as needed)
- Permitting process review (AOT/Stormwater, Wetlands, DOT, Local, Shoreland, and/or Water/Wastewater)
- Concept refinement (Schematic Design)
- Preliminary cost estimates
- Review with client team
- Community presentations

Feasibility summary document with recommendations for Phase 2 implementation

- Phase 1 Implementation plans
- Project costs
- List of required permits
- Critical path timeline for bidding and implementation

A. INTRODUCTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of New Hampshire saw record-breaking attendance throughout its State Park system in 2020 and 2021. The surge in outdoor recreation is nation-wide due to the increased awareness regarding the health benefits of outdoor recreation and the surge presented by the COVID pandemic. To respond to this increasing interest in outdoor recreation, the New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation (NHDPDR) identified the need to expand camping opportunities at their State Parks for the Division to continue to fulfill its mission of “providing New Hampshire’s citizens and guests with outstanding recreational, educational, and inspirational experiences.” Six campground sites were identified by NHDPDR for the feasibility study: Pawtuckaway State Park, Crawford Notch State Park, Jericho Mountain State Park, Mollidgewock State Park, and Catamount Pond and Bear Hill within Bear Brook State Park.

The New Hampshire State Parks Campground Expansion Feasibility Study was conducted to assist NHDPDR evaluate the feasibility, conceptual design, probable construction costs, and priorities of the campground expansion options at all six campground sites. The project was supported by a multi-disciplinary team of consultants that included landscape architects, recreation planners, civil engineers, architects, architectural historians, natural resource specialists, and archaeologists. The project team worked through a comprehensive process to gather data; conduct site visits; analyze existing conditions, facilities, and operations at the parks; develop feasibility information and concept alternatives for each site; identify a preferred design concept for each park; and provide feasibility information around probable costs, project phasing, and permitting considerations.

Key elements for the study included analysis of the visitor experiences and site-specific recreation opportunities, consideration of current and projected camping demand and other recreational trends, investigation of individual site utilization and operational

considerations for the overall campground, sensitivity to historic CCC-era architectural resources, shoreland protection and natural resource conservation, and balance for maintaining park operations with manageable staff resources. Understanding sustainable capacities for the campgrounds and facilities was critical as well, as the goal of supporting increased visitation is balanced by the desire to maintain and enhance the quality of the experience that makes these parks such cherished resources.

The Feasibility Study delivered campground expansion, recreation concepts, and probable costs for all six campground expansion opportunities. These findings are summarized in this report along with the final recommendations for the three selected campground sites that will move forward with design development, permitting, and construction – to deliver expanded outdoor recreation opportunities for the State of New Hampshire.

The campgrounds selected for expansion collectively provide a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities, including swimming, fishing, paddling, boating, mountain biking, and off-road motorized recreation. The campgrounds selected for expansion also represent a geographic mix, with two northern parks (Mollidgewock State Park, Jericho Mountain State Park) and one southern park (Pawtuckaway State Park.)

The financial investment required to make the desired impact to the recreational offerings was a factor in selecting which campgrounds should receive funding for implementation, along with a consideration for the apparent market demand. There was a need to strike a balance between spreading the investment around while ensuring that the level of investment for any individual campground is sufficient to have significant impact to the recreational opportunities provided in the state. This impact is a function of not only the number of additional campsites being offered to the public, but also the quality of the camping experience being provided.

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE PARKS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Division of Parks and Recreation is to provide New Hampshire’s citizens and guests with outstanding recreational, educational, and inspirational experiences through the responsible management and cooperative stewardship of the state’s natural, recreational, and cultural resources.

A. INTRODUCTION

Below is a summary of the campgrounds selected for expansion, with an explanation of the rationale:

JERICO MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

- > High occupancy/utilization rates for campsites indicates a strong market demand for more camping opportunities.
- > With its impressive ATV/OHRV offerings, including an annual ATV festival, Jericho Mountain provides a unique recreational opportunity that would benefit from further investment to fully capitalize on the ATV enthusiast market. Many ATV enthusiasts enjoy RV camping, but the campground does not currently provide campsites that are optimized for this use.
- > A large area of the campground adjacent to the ATV event area was cleared years ago for an event area. This area presents an excellent opportunity to develop RV sites in an otherwise underutilized area.

MOLLIDGEWOCK STATE PARK

- > Key location for taking advantage of all the recreational opportunities that the Androscoggin River and Thirteen Mile Woods Scenic Area offer. The existing campground has factors that likely reduce the level of visitation:
 - Primitive/substandard amenities typical of a remote camping experience being provided in a non-primitive setting. The lack of modern camping amenities (flush toilets and showers, permanent office/store building with offerings beyond firewood) limit the demographic reach of potential visitors.
 - Campsites along the river are spatially constrained, with many sites having minimal or no privacy. Most parking spaces are very small, limiting the vehicle size that can be supported.
 - A dump station is not currently provided, further limiting desirability to RV users.
 - Water access is in need of improvement
- > Making investments to address these deficiencies, in addition to providing new campsites that provide more space and privacy in a wooded environment, would make the campground more appealing to more potential visitors to this popular scenic and recreational region of the state.

PAWTUCKAWAY STATE PARK

- > High occupancy/utilization rates for campsites indicates a strong market demand for more camping opportunities, and the park is close to population centers.
- > A large undeveloped area of the park has qualities that are conducive to campground development:
 - Extensive attractive shoreline
 - Mature wooded canopy
 - Slopes within acceptable range
 - Minimal natural resource constraints (e.g. wetlands)
 - Centrally located with easy access from existing campground road network

Combined, the investment in the selected campground expansions would deliver additional capacity in needed locations, expand the recreation offerings, and balance the investment across the state portfolio in a strategic method to support and deliver the mission of the park system.

A. INTRODUCTION

First phase improvements include:

JERICO MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

- > 9 Pull-Through Premium Sites (water/electricity/septic)
- > 10 Back-In Premium Sites (water/electricity/septic)
- > Dump station
- > Infill Sites: 3 Standard, 2 Shelter, 1 Double Shelter
- > Electricity in existing campground

MOLLIDGEWOCK STATE PARK

- > New, centrally located Bathhouse/Office/Store
- > Approximately 10-15 existing Standard Sites upgraded to be Improved Sites (water + electricity)
- > New boat launch dock behind the new Store
- > Four Walk-in Sites along entry road
- > Wooded campsite loop with approximately 17 Standard Sites + pit toilet
- > Existing road improvements
- > General site/landscape improvements
- > Decommission underutilized campsites where needed (net add of 15-20 campsites to campground total)

PAWTUCKAWAY STATE PARK

- > New campground pod with 35 Improved Sites (water + electricity)
- > Bathhouse serving the new campsites
- > Dump station

Although the funding did not support campground expansion at all six campgrounds included in this Feasibility Study, it is worth noting that the remaining campground projects identified in the Feasibility Report deserve consideration for future investment. The proposed Dry River Campground expansion would represent a tremendous opportunity to broaden the camping offerings in that iconic recreational area, with a strong market demand. Bear Hill at Bear Brook State Park, with its assemblage of historic structures, would provide a unique opportunity for group and event-oriented camping. At minimum, upkeep of the structures should be prioritized to maintain the opportunity in the future. Lastly, an equestrian campground at the Catamount Pond area of Bear Brook State Park would provide a form of camping not currently provided by any other NH State Parks.

The following comprehensive feasibility study offers all the supporting information for the project – and offers the insights, opportunities, and conclusions discovered throughout the process.

CAMPGROUND CONTEXT

NORTHERN PARKS



Molligewock State Park
Campground



Jericho Mountain
State Park Campground



Crawford Notch
State Park Dry River
Campground

SOUTHERN PARKS



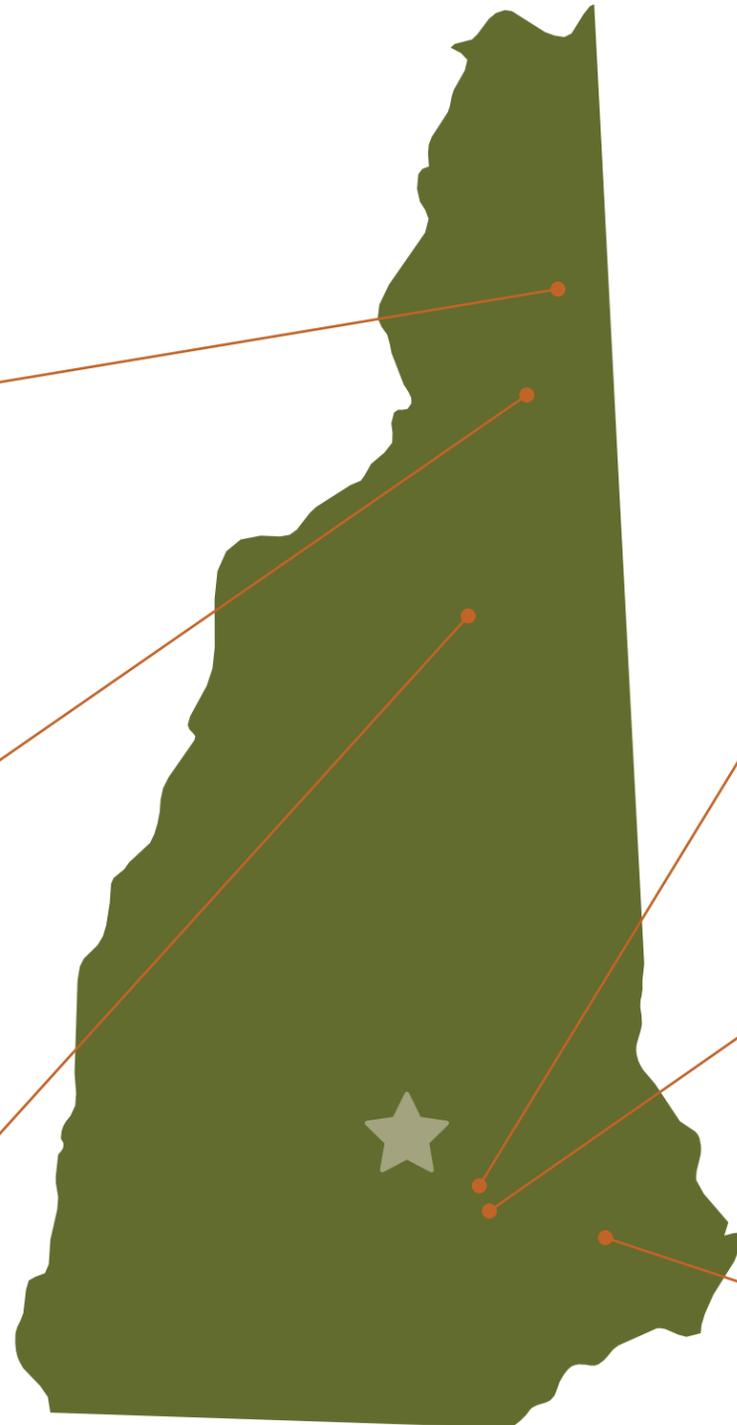
Bear Brook State Park
Catamount Pond Area



Bear Brook State Park
Bear Hill Camp



Pawtuckaway State Park



CAMPSITE TYPOLOGIES

OVERVIEW

New Hampshire has 20 State Park Campgrounds with facilities in a variety of natural contexts, offering a variety of camping experiences such as primitive camping, cabin and yurt rentals, full-service hookups for recreational vehicles, and lean-to's. Currently camping offerings are overwhelmingly standard campsites without utility hookups of any kind. Of the 20 campgrounds in the system, only six offer campsites with utility hookups, and the 114 campsites with hookups only represent 8.6% of the sites state-wide (1,328 total). These sites include 37 "improved sites" (water/electric) and 73 "premium sites" (water/sewer/electric), with four that only offer electric hookups.

While many people enjoy "roughing it" at a campground with limited amenities, there is a growing population of campers that enjoy a higher level of comfort offered by camping in a recreational vehicle with hookups. Although many people think of large motorhomes when they hear the term "RV's", they are only one type of a wide range of recreational vehicles, which also includes small trailers and truck campers. While the parking spurs needed to accommodate recreational vehicles are often bigger than standard spurs, the character of a campground that supports recreational vehicle equipment can be very similar to any other state park campground. With a sensitivity to locating sites amongst existing mature trees, campgrounds that accommodate recreational equipment - such as trailers and motorhomes - can maintain an attractive natural character, in contrast to many private campground resorts that are often typified by open lawn areas with tightly packed sites and recreational amenities like swimming pools that are suburban in character.

All campsites within the NH State Park system offer the basic amenities of a fire ring, a picnic table, and a place to camp overnight. For tent camping, the vast majority of sites just offer a relatively level dirt area to pitch a tent, while some sites offer an elevated tent platform. With a level and dry wood surface, tent platforms provide a slightly more refined camping experience. While most sites include a parking spur directly adjacent to the campsite, there is a growing interest in "walk-in" sites. Walk-in sites are typically a relatively short walk from a designated parking space, situated away from the higher intensity areas of the campground. These sites can be located in both primitive and developed campgrounds and are appealing to a camper who want access to campground amenities but are willing to carry their gear a bit further to enjoy the benefits of more privacy, lower noise, and a more natural campsite free of vehicles.

CAMPING IN SHELTERS

While the majority of campsites rely on campers bringing their own shelter, whether that be a tent, pop-up trailer, or some other variety of recreational vehicle, a number of sites include a permanent shelter. Within the NH State Park campground system, 18 sites provide lean-to's, 33 sites provide cabins, and four sites include yurts. Cabins and yurts sometimes fall into the category of "glamping," or "glamorous camping," which is a term used to describe camping in shelters that provide a higher level of comfort than conventional tent camping. On-site shelter options can also reduce the need for specialized gear and setup, which lowers the barrier to entry for new campers who are interested in trying camping out.

Lean-to

- > Three-sided structures
- > Can be slept in directly, or a tent can be set up inside.
- > Offer protection from the weather and some privacy
- > Hooks to hang personal items

Cabin

- > Comes with two bunk beds and a double futon day-bed (or similar)
- > Maximum of six people per cabin
- > Some offer electricity

Yurt

- > Comes with a bunk bed and futon
- > Maximum of six people per yurt

UNDEVELOPED AND DEVELOPED CAMPING

With campgrounds near and far from population centers, the NH State Park Campground system offers camping with varying levels of development appropriate to the context and intended customer base:

Remote

Remote sites have very limited facilities, services, and amenities. Remote campsites and cabins are carry-in, carry-out where the campers are responsible for removing their own trash. Each site has a picnic table and a fire ring and sometimes a tent platform. Drinking water is not available at remote sites, but campers can usually fill portable water containers at main campgrounds. Remote sites are accessed by boat (canoe, kayak, motorboat) or foot (walk-in). Pit toilets are typically available.

Primitive

Primitive campsites have limited facilities, services, and amenities. Each site has a fire ring, picnic table, a flat area for a tent, and a parking space. Primitive sites have access to pit toilets and drinking water spigots. Typically, all trash/waste is carry-in, carry-out.

Developed

Developed campgrounds offer an array of facilities, services, and amenities. Some developed campgrounds have stores that sell ice, firewood, batteries, and other goods as well as kayak/ canoe rentals. Services such as trash/recycling dumpsters are provided, and dump stations for recreational vehicles are often available. Facilities include flush toilets, running water, showers, and sometimes laundry. Developed campgrounds frequently offer boat launches, playgrounds, and other amenities. Some sites offer water, electricity, and/or septic hookups.

A. INTRODUCTION

CAMPSITE TYPOLOGIES CONTINUED

TRENDS IN CAMPING

Campground planning should account for the following emerging trends in camping to respond to customer interests (and increase revenue,) while staying true to the NH State Parks mission of providing affordable recreational options in a natural setting:

- > Lots of new campers (in part due to COVID)
- > More diversity
- > Increasingly popular with families
- > Increased recreational vehicle ownership
- > Remote work flexibility increases desire for cellular and Wi-Fi services and mid-week visitation
- > Increased interest in glamping, especially among new campers

RESERVE AMERICA

The customer-facing online reservations platform Reserve America expands on the standard campsite with no hookups to differentiate the equipment length that can fit at each site based on the length of the parking spur:

- > Standard
 - Can accommodate equipment length of 20-40 feet
- > Pop-up/Tent
 - Can accommodate equipment length of 10-20 feet
- > Tent Only
 - Can accommodate equipment length of 10 feet

For the purposes of this report, “Standard” sites simply refer to campsites without utility hookups.

RV Classifications



Truck Camper
8+ ft



Travel Trailer
13 - 35 ft



Pop-Up Camper
8 - 16 ft



Fifth Wheel
17 - 40 ft



Class B
17 - 23 ft



Class A
26 - 45 ft



Class C
20 - 30 ft