

## 3.0 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

### 3.1 Introduction

Open space is any land or water set aside or designated for recreational, natural, conservation, or other uses that are not developed. Recreation can include a variety of activities for health and fitness as well as general enjoyment, and it is the responsibility of local and State governments to provide places for outdoor recreation. Open space and recreation are vital to the health and well-being of Lincoln's community members, the local economy, and natural resources. Where conservation lands occur near water bodies, they can contribute to better water quality.

Through this comprehensive planning process, the Town has considered its needs and preferences for recreation and open space and identified opportunities for expanding and strengthening its network of protected and designated open spaces and recreational areas. With a gradually aging population, Lincoln may focus on developing more passive recreation spaces in the future. The Town has indicated a need to preserve and maintain natural and agricultural areas.

### 3.2 Existing Conditions

Lincoln's community currently benefits from a variety of recreational opportunities that serve all ages, including several playgrounds and an updated active Senior Center. Outdoor recreation activities center around several large protected open spaces with trails, an increasingly accessible riverfront, and many sports fields. In total, the town has over 3,370 acres of recreation and conservation area, which represents 28% of the Town's land area. As of the last Comprehensive Plan (2003), 2,577 acres of land were protected (21.3%), and the town set a goal of protecting 30% of the land area. In the last twenty years, the town has been close to achieving that goal, but still more land needs to be conserved to serve the community. As the Town sees an increasing population, it will be important to expand on the existing set of well-used recreational resources.

#### 3.2.1 *Recreation Areas and Facilities*

Recreational areas and facilities within the town include publicly-owned outdoor recreational areas, privately-owned outdoor recreational areas that are significant for the community, and publicly-operated indoor recreational sites. These sites support recreational activities for all ages and feature opportunities for passive and active recreation across various sites. The community has 27 facilities dedicated to recreation, including playlots, playgrounds, athletic fields, fishing and boating access, and a variety of parks, conservation areas, and other facilities. A new senior center was opened in 2010 with an exercise room, multiple activity rooms, and much more space for older adults to gather.

#### 3.2.2 *Outdoor Recreation Areas and Open Space Inventory*

The following inventory identifies the existing outdoor recreational areas and sites, across all categories of recreation and ownership, that meet the community's recreation needs. In Table 3-1, the outdoor recreation and conservation areas are listed by village. See Map 3-1, Outdoor

Recreational and Conservation Areas, for the location of each site. The table includes the following information:

- Facility Name
- Total Land Area of Facility
- Service Type
- Ownership
- Public Access
- Whether the Facility was Included in the 2003 Inventory
- Amenities

The Service Type indicates the primary function associated with the site: Recreation, Conservation, or Special uses. Lands are owned by the Town (Municipal), State, Private, or as otherwise noted. Many sites offer public access for recreation, but some conservation areas restrict public access and are noted as “No” under Public Access.

Table 3-1. Outdoor Recreation and Conservation Lands by Neighborhood Villages						
Map #	Facility Name	Land Area	Service Type	Ownership	Public Access	Included in 2003 Plan
<b>Neighborhood Villages: Manville/Albion</b>						
1	Albion Field/Playground	6 acres	Recreation	Municipal	Yes	
L1	Albion Mills Conservation Area	1.2 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes
46	Albion Youth Center	<1 acre	Special	Municipal	Yes	Yes
30	Blackstone River State Par	5 acres	Conservation	State	Yes	
16	Blackstone River Access	7 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	
50	Blackstone River Conservation Area	1 acre	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	
L2	Church Street Conservation Area	<1 acre	Recreation	Municipal		Yes
53	Crookfall Brook	96 acres	Conservation	Woonsocket Water Division	No	
7	Handy Pond Conservation Area	111 acres	Conservation	State/Municipal	Yes	Yes
L3	High School Conservation Area	28.5 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes
L4	Kirkbrae Country Club	100 acres	Special	Private		Yes
58	Laporte Avenue	1 acre	Conservation	Municipal	No	
63	Main Street Manville	1 acre	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	
17	Manville Memorial Park	26 acres	Conservation and Recreation	Municipal	Yes	Yes
L6	Manville Sportsman Club	57 acres	Special	Private		Yes
18	Northern Lincoln Elementary	14 acres	Recreation	School	Yes	Yes

**Table 3-1. Outdoor Recreation and Conservation Lands by Neighborhood Villages**

Map #	Facility Name	Land Area	Service Type	Ownership	Public Access	Included in 2003 Plan	
23	Rochambeau Fishing	10 acres	Special	Private		Yes	
L8	School Street Conservation Area	1.8 acres	Conservation	Municipal		Yes	
78	Shady River Conservation Area	15 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
82	Timberline Drive	45 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
<b>Neighborhood Village: Limerock</b>							
47	Aldrich-Marshall Woods	62 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
L9	Ballard's Farm/Willow Brook Farm	1 acre	Special	Private		Yes	
51	Bridle Drive	7 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
4	Butterfly Pond and Conservation Area	1 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
L23	Camp Meehan	52 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
52	Central Elementary School	6 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
6	Davies Middle School		Recreation	-	Yes		
L10	Fairlawn Golf Course	15 acres	Recreation	State		Yes	
59	Lennon Road Conservation Area	2 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
10	Lime Acres Park	17 acres	Conservation and Recreation	Municipal	NA	Yes	
34	Lime Rock	148 acres	Conservation	State	Yes	Yes	
35	Lime Kiln	3 acres	Conservation	State	Yes	Yes	
13	Lincoln Woods State Park	<1 acre	Conservation	State	Yes		
61	Louisquisset Pike	<1 acre	Conservation	Town of North Providence	Yes		
64	Manton Reservoir and Conservation Area	16 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
27	Moshassuck River	301 acres	Conservation	State	Yes		
70	New Middle School Open Space	23 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
71	North Central Conservation Area	<1 acre	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
72	Old Louisquisset Pike Conservation Area	2 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
73	Paddock Drive	31 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
L12	Quinville Playground	1.3 acres	Recreation	Municipal		Yes	
L13	Quinville Conservation Areas	1 acre	Recreation	Municipal		Yes	
83	Town Hall Park	13 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
L28	Wenscott Reservoir	31 acres	Conservation	State	Yes	Yes	

Table 3-1. Outdoor Recreation and Conservation Lands by Neighborhood Villages

Map #	Facility Name	Land Area	Service Type	Ownership	Public Access	Included in 2003 Plan	
L28	Wenscott Reservoir	11 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
<b>Neighborhood Village: Lonsdale</b>							
48	Barbaras Way	2 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
2	Barney's Pond and Conservation Area		Conservation	Municipal		Yes	
3	Blackstone River Bikeway	28 acres	Conservation and Recreation	State	Yes		
49	Blackstone River / Scott Pond	1 acre	Conservation	Municipal	No		
24	Blackstone River	91 acres	Conservation	State	Yes		
49	Blackstone River	20 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
L15	Butterfly/Smith Farm <sup>2</sup>	105 acres	Conservation	Private	Yes	Yes	
L16	Cass Street Conservation Area	4.1 acres	Conservation	Municipal		Yes	
5	Chase Farm Conservation Area	97 acres	Conservation and Recreation	Municipal	Yes		
L17	Front Street Conservation Area	1.7 acres	Conservation	Municipal		Yes	
9	Gateway to Great Road	12 acres	Conservation and Recreation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
57	Holiday Drive Conservation Area	1 acre	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
11	Lincoln Almond Field	5 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
L18	Lincoln Ave Conservation Area	6.6 acres	Conservation	Municipal		Yes	
L19	Lincoln Country Club	55 acres	Special	Private		Yes	
L20	Lincoln Senior Center		Recreation	Municipal		Yes	
14	Lonsdale Drive-in	36 acres	Conservation and Recreation	State	Yes		
15	Lonsdale Park / Sam Moore Field	19 acres	Conservation and Recreation	Federal	Yes		
66	Maria Street Conservation Area	2 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
42	Moshassuck River	105 acres	Conservation	State	Yes		
2	Saylesville Pond	5 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
77	Scott Pond	1 acre	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
80	Smithfield Avenue	3 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
81	Thibaudeau Farms-Lincoln Gardens	16 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
L21	Town Hall Park	5 acres	Conservation	Municipal		Yes	
84	Tucker Street Conservation Area	8 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
85	Valley Marsh	19 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	

Table 3-1. Outdoor Recreation and Conservation Lands by Neighborhood Villages							
Map #	Facility Name	Land Area	Service Type	Ownership	Public Access	Included in 2003 Plan	
<b>Neighborhood Villages: Saylesville/Fairlawn</b>							
L22	Arnold Ave Conservation Area	1.8 acres	Conservation	Municipal		Yes	
2	Barney Pond Area	NA	Conservation and Recreation	Municipal	NA		
L23	Camp Meehan	76 acres	Special	Private		Yes	
L24	Cobble Hill Road Open Space	24.8 acres	Recreation	State		Yes	
L25	Davies Technical High School	233 acres	Conservation and Recreation	State		Yes	
54	Fairlawn Elementary School	6 acres	Recreation	Municipal	Yes		
8	Fairlawn Park	6 acres	Conservation and Recreation	Private	Yes	Yes	Playground
13	Lincoln Park	161 acres	Special	Private		Yes	
13	Lincoln Woods State Park	654 acres	Conservation and Recreation	State/Private	Yes	Yes	
67	Mark Drive	<1 acre	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
69	Moshassuck River	2 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
19/20	Olney Pond Fishing Access		Conservation and Recreation	State	Yes		
74	Pleasant View Avenue Conservation Area	4 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
L27	Reservoir Conservation Area	5.8 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
76	Saylesville Elementary School and Park	11 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
2	Saylesville Pond	<1 acre	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
22	Sullivan Field		Conservation and Recreation	Municipal	Yes		
86	Woodland Street Conservation Area	3.2 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
<b>Neighborhood Village: Industrial Corridor</b>							
44	Blackstone River Bikeway	46 acres	Conservation	State	Yes		
30	Blackstone River	11 acres	Conservation	State	Yes		
53	Crookfall Brook	35 acres	Conservation	Woonsocket Water Division	No		
34	Lime Rock	<1 acre	Conservation	State	Yes		
12	Lincoln High School Athletic Complex	8 acres	Conservation and Recreation	Municipal	Yes		
60	Lincoln Jr Sr High	54 acres	Conservation and Recreation	Municipal	Yes	Yes	
L5	Lincoln Library	1 acre	Special -Library	Municipal		Yes	
68	Meeting House Conservation Area	2 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		

Table 3-1. Outdoor Recreation and Conservation Lands by Neighborhood Villages							
Map #	Facility Name	Land Area	Service Type	Ownership	Public Access	Included in 2003 Plan	
34	Moshassuck River	0 acres	Conservation	State	Yes		
71	North Central Conservation Area	39 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
79	Skate Pond	8 acres	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
82	Timberline Drive	<1 acre	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
<b>Neighborhood Village: Quinnville</b>							
38	Blackstone River Bikeway	48 acres	Conservation	State	Yes		
L11	Kelly House, Blackstone River State Park/Bikeway	1 acre	Conservation	State	Yes	Yes	
75	Quinnville Conservation Area	<1 acre	Conservation	Municipal	Yes		
21	Quinnville Playground		Conservation and Recreation	Municipal	Yes		

Source: Town of Lincoln 2023; RIGIS

Table 3-2 presents recreation and open space by village based on compiled information from the 2003 Lincoln Comprehensive Plan and RIGIS data sources on recreation and open space, listed in Table 3-1 above. The neighborhood village with the most is Saylesville/Fairlawn, with almost 1,200 acres of recreation and conservation space. Proportional to their village sizes, Limerock and the Industrial Corridor have much less open space for their size (15% and 13%), as compared with Lonsdale (54%) or Saylesville/Fairlawn (64%), which have much more for their area.

Table 3-2. Recreation and Conservation Areas by Village		
Neighborhood Village	Acres of Recreation and Conservation Sites	% of Village
Limerock	747	15%
Saylesville/Fairlawn	1190	64%
Manville/Albion	529	26%
Lonsdale	648	54%
Industrial Corridor	206	13%
Quinnville	50	30%
<b>All Villages Total</b>	<b>3,371</b>	<b>28%</b>

Sources: (RIGIS, 2021), (RIGIS, 2021), (Town of Lincoln, 2003)

Figure 3-1. Lincoln Woods State Park Picnic Area



### 3.2.3 Open Space and Conservation Areas

The largest recreation areas on natural landscapes in the town are (sizes are noted in Table 3-1 above):

- Lincoln Woods State Park (State-owned)
- Chase Farm Conservation Area (Town owned)
- Moshassuck River (State-owned)
- Lime Rock Conklin (TNC)
- Handy Pond Conservation Area (Town owned)
- Blackstone River Bikeway (State-owned)
- Crookfall Brook (Woonsocket Water Division owned)
- Manville Memorial Park (Town owned)
- Aldrich-Marshall Woods (Town owned)
- Lime Rock Nature Preserve (State-owned)
- Wenscott Reservoir (Town and State-owned)
- Blackstone River (Town and State-owned)

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan identified several properties as priority conservation acquisitions that have since been acquired or expanded. Handy Pond Conservation Area is a recent addition to the recreation opportunities in Lincoln that offers interesting topography for hiking, fishing, picnicking, and ice-skating. A new open space was created for the middle school in 2005. In 2014, the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park was created out of a smaller portion of the

National Heritage Corridor as a new National Park (Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, 2021). Blackstone River State Park and Bikeway offers a transportation corridor for bikes and walking, passive recreation areas and river access, and a historical interpretation of the river’s unique regional significance.

Many sites include trail networks and outdoor recreation opportunities (See Table 3-3 for a listing of recreational areas with hiking trails). Lincoln Woods State Park and Blackstone River Bikeway provide a significant variety of outdoor recreation opportunities for the town and regional visitors. Town parks offer hiking, fishing, kayak/canoe rentals, bouldering/rock climbing (in Lincoln Woods), in addition to playgrounds and sports fields.

Table 3-3. Miles of Trails in Recreational Areas	
Site Name	Miles of Trails
Lincoln Woods State Park	12.9
Blackstone River Bikeway	11.1
Moshassuck River Preserve	6.0
Handy Pond Conservation Area	4.0
Lime Rock Nature Preserve	3.1
Chase Farm Conservation Area	2.3
Wenscott Reservoir	1.6

Source: (RIGIS, 2021); (Explore Rhode Island, 2020)

Town conservation efforts have been aided by support from the state and volunteers with the Lincoln Conservation Commission/Municipal Land Trust. A local community cleanup crew organized on social media also supports the Conservation Commission's efforts.

Other open space partners include:

- Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor
- Blackstone River Watershed Council
- Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- Moshassuck River Group

See the Natural Resources chapter for more information on conservation efforts.

### 3.2.4 Other Recreation Facilities

The Lincoln Community Garden at the former Thibaudeau Farm is free for all residents to grow their crops (Barr, 2023). More information about community agriculture is covered in the Agriculture Chapter.

Indoor recreation facilities also include privately managed facilities open to the public for dance/fitness, tennis courts, bowling, swimming, and shooting.

### 3.2.5 Recreation Department

The Town of Lincoln Park & Recreation Department (LPR) provides recreational activities, programs, and events for Lincoln’s residents. Regular activities include youth and adult programs, a summer concert series, and an annual Memorial Day Parade (Town of Lincoln, 2023).



Currently, the staff of LPR consists of three salaried positions of Director, Assistant Director, Youth Center Coordinator, and Supervisor, with paid part-time and seasonal staff. In the Lincoln 2023 Expense Budget, the Parks and Recreation budget was \$547,346 (Town of Lincoln, 2023). Recreation capital improvements are funded through the municipal capital and operating budgets.

### 3.3 Challenges and Opportunities

#### 3.3.1 Challenges

Managing park use in an active and growing community is a common challenge for towns of Lincoln's size. Residents noted the need for better maintenance of fields and playgrounds and regular trash pickup in parks, which requires staff resources to accomplish. Older fields and facilities need updates or refurbishments to continue to function well and meet user expectations. The Recreation Department is heavily dependent on volunteers and may need more staff to assist with park maintenance as well as coordinating volunteers for sports leagues, for example.

Meanwhile, open space is under pressure from development as the population increases, making it urgent to protect lands from conversion before they can be protected. Directing development into areas that are already built up may help offset this pressure, as well as what funding might be appropriate.

#### 3.3.2 Opportunities

In public meetings and community surveys, Lincoln residents generally believe that the Town provides adequate recreational opportunities but think it important to maintain and expand the offerings. Residents view open space as an important town asset and support the acquisition of land for recreation and conservation. In some villages, recreational options are somewhat limited, especially in parts of Limerock Village and the Industrial Corridor. Existing open space properties can provide opportunities for connectivity if adjacent properties can be acquired. The Rhode Island Natural Heritage Preservation Grants, the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, and the National Heritage Corridor are regional partners that may be able to assist or raise the profile on Lincoln's open space needs in these and other areas. Environmentally sensitive areas should continue to be preserved through set-asides during development or direct protection, with limited recreation access.

Existing parks could also be expanded or updated, or new access points could be created to enable local use, in areas where new parks are limited. New or underutilized facilities may benefit from additional programming or amenities, such as Chase Farm, which was noted as a site that could be used more. In developing future facilities' programming, several special populations should be considered that may have unique facility needs or recreational interests: youth (under 18), adults from 40-49, and older adults (over 65); as well as populations from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

### 3.4 Goals & Policies

Goals and their corresponding policies reflect the desired changes of Lincoln residents for the next ten years, as gathered from a public workshop held in May 2024. Building off the challenges and opportunities, the desire for more recreational opportunities and spaces, as well as adequate maintenance for them, was reflected in the town wide goals. Similarly, the village-specific goals

focused on addressing the challenge of preserving and managing open space. Residents expanded on village-specific goals to include the improvement of access and connectivity to important recreation spaces.

Goals	Policies
<p><b>OS1. Town Wide</b> Provide adequate active and passive recreational areas and facilities throughout the community to serve a wide range of populations and activity levels.</p>	<p><b>OS1.1. Town Wide</b> Support the Recreation Department’s programming and facilities by continuing to adequately fund and staff the department.</p> <p><b>OS1.2. Town Wide</b> Continue to provide an active maintenance and rehabilitation program and schedule to maintain and upgrade existing facilities.</p> <p><b>OS1.3. Town Wide</b> Prioritize projects that build upon existing infrastructure and resources, ensuring that new recreational facilities are well-connected and meet the needs of the community.</p> <p><b>OS1.4. Town Wide</b> Increase the public’s awareness of recreation opportunities, including using social media, the Town website, workshops, and other outreach efforts to inform residents of recreation programs and provide a means of public input.</p> <p><b>OS1.5. Town Wide</b> Work with adjoining towns and the region to advance environmental resource protection strategies.</p>
<p><b>OS2. Albion</b> Strengthen Albion’s village center through strategic land use planning that emphasizes its mixed-use character, economic vitality, and community services, ensuring it remains a central hub for residents and visitors.</p>	<p><b>OS2.1. Albion</b> Prioritize the acquisition of open land to prevent overdevelopment and ensure the preservation of natural resources.</p> <p><b>OS2.2. Albion</b> Develop and implement a comprehensive management plan for the area, focusing on sustainability and public enjoyment.</p> <p><b>OS2.3. Albion</b> Enhance the connectivity and user experience of the Blackstone River Heritage Corridor through targeted improvements.</p>
<p><b>OS3. Manville</b> Preserve and improve Manville Village’s open space and recreational areas for community use.</p>	<p><b>OS3.1. Manville</b> Encourage the inclusion of outdoor common spaces and shared/public resources in existing and proposed developments (shared recreational facilities, walking trails, community gardens, exercise equipment, etc.) via recreational and/or conservation easements.</p>
<p><b>OS4. Lime Rock</b> Enhance the network of informal walking paths in Lime Rock.</p>	<p><b>OS4.1. Lime Rock</b> Expand and maintain access to the Blackstone River for all Lincoln residents.</p>

	<p><b>OS4.2. Lime Rock</b> Leverage Lime Rock’s landscape for the creation of a system of informal walking paths.</p>
	<p><b>OS4.3. Lime Rock</b> Proactively pursue the acquisition of land, for open space or town service uses.</p>
<p><b>OS5. Quinnville</b> Enhance access to the Blackstone River Corridor, aiming to mitigate traffic impacts on Quinnville.</p>	<p><b>OS5.1. Quinnville</b> Develop additional access points to the Blackstone River Corridor to distribute visitor flow more evenly along the corridor and reduce the number of vehicle trips while maintaining or increasing the overall number of visitors to the corridor.</p>
<p><b>OS6. Lonsdale</b> Enhance public access to and protection of the Blackstone and Moshassuck Rivers, linking the area’s historic and natural resources.</p>	<p><b>OS6.1. Lonsdale</b> Collaborate with Corridor organizations to improve access to and conservation of the Blackstone and Moshassuck Rivers.</p>
<p><b>OS7. Fairlawn</b> Develop additional passive recreation spaces and improve connectivity among existing and anticipated recreational areas in Fairlawn.</p>	<p><b>OS7.1. Fairlawn</b> Identify and develop new passive recreation areas.</p>
	<p><b>OS7.2. Fairlawn</b> Explore and establish connections to, from, between, and within existing and anticipated outdoor recreation facilities.</p>
<p><b>OS8. Saylesville</b> Maintain and enhance the existing recreational lands to meet the community’s needs as Saylesville grows.</p>	<p><b>OS8.1. Saylesville</b> Seize opportunities to enhance the recreational and open space system when they arise.</p>
	<p><b>OS8.2. Saylesville</b> Explore and establish connections between Lincoln Woods and Saylesville neighborhoods by enhancing active transportation facilities.</p>

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