

POLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

WATERHOUSE PARK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

August 11, 2021

Waterhouse Park is an area of approximately 90 acres jointly owned by the Town of Poland (60 acres) and the Pine Grove Cemetery Corporation (30 acres) as shown in the attached map. The area abuts the Poland Corner Road and the Poland Community School. The park is bisected by Waterhouse Brook which arises in the town owned Bragdon Hill Conservation Area and drains Upper, Middle and Lower Range Ponds. The pond above the dam has long been a roadside scenic area, a fishing spot and canoe launch site. The park kiosk is located here and a pedestrian bridge was installed across the dam in September, 2019. A granite step kayak and canoe launch have also been installed here.

Approximately 2 miles of walking trails have been developed. The main trail is a circular route. Beginning at the Kiosk near the dam, the trail crosses in front of the firehouse, then runs northerly to the athletic field behind Poland School, through pine forest and back across Waterhouse Brook to the abandoned Maine Central Railroad bed (now Poland Town property) and southerly along the railroad bed back to the dam. There are two scenic side trails which provide sites for wildlife viewing.

Recent detailed naturalist observations have established that the entire area provides excellent habitat for multiple bird and mammal species as well as many examples of local wildflowers. The park is an ideal laboratory and field study area for school and community biological science programs, and is seeing increased use for this purpose. The area is richly connected with the natural, business and community history of Poland (see attached document by Fred Huntress, Town Forester).

In the recent past a wide variety of activities have taken place here. This has included hunting, trapping, snowmobiling, ATV riding, walking and nature observation. The overall area includes the lower playing fields for the Community School as well as parking. A portion of the town owned land on the north side of the brook has served as a town sand pit and stump dump. In the foreseeable future, the sand pit will be played out and no longer useful to the town. Some of these past uses are in conflict with others or have caused damage to the area.

The purpose of the present plan is to define future development and usage of the area and prevent potential usage conflicts.

The past 7 years of trail building, biological study and general experience with the area has led the Conservation Commission to conclude that the highest value for this property is as a nature reserve. (see attachment "Waterhouse Brook Conservation Area" by Alan Audet). Future plans should place greatest emphasis on preservation and improvement of habitat and usage of the area for non-invasive activities with an emphasis on passive recreation and observation of nature.

The Conservation Commission has further concluded that Waterhouse Park is of such high value to the town as a nature reserve that it should be protected by conservation easement as has been done for the town's other two conservation areas. Hopefully, the Cemetery Association will add a similar easement to their portion of the park.

The following maintenance and usage provisions should be adopted:

Access to the area will be encouraged primarily for walking, quiet contemplation, nature observation (e.g., tracking, photography, birding). Use by motorized vehicles should be limited to snowmobiles (in designated areas), and maintenance vehicles when absolutely necessary. In the past, off-road vehicles have done repeated serious damage and been in conflict with other users (e.g., excessive noise, speed and dust).

Educational and scientific programs will be encouraged. Programs involving large groups and/or alteration of habitat or installation of temporary equipment and structures may be subject to review and permitting by Conservation Commission.

Future trail development may include installation of gates, markers, signs, and interpretive material, placement of rustic or granite block benches, construction of small game blinds (for observation and wildlife photography), added or improved kiosks and installation of portable toilets.

Any future forestry activity will be directed at improvement of habitat and general safety. A forest management plan will be developed and periodically renewed.

An abandoned well and decayed pumphouse should be removed.

At the end of its use, the sandpit should be reclaimed and re-vegetated to maintain and improve wildlife habitat.

There will be continued necessary maintenance of the bridge, dam, carry-in boat launch, kiosks, gates and parking areas.

Specifically permitted and prohibited uses are as follows. These are subject to change as dictated by current conditions, (e.g. trail conditions, habitat concerns, current usage problems)

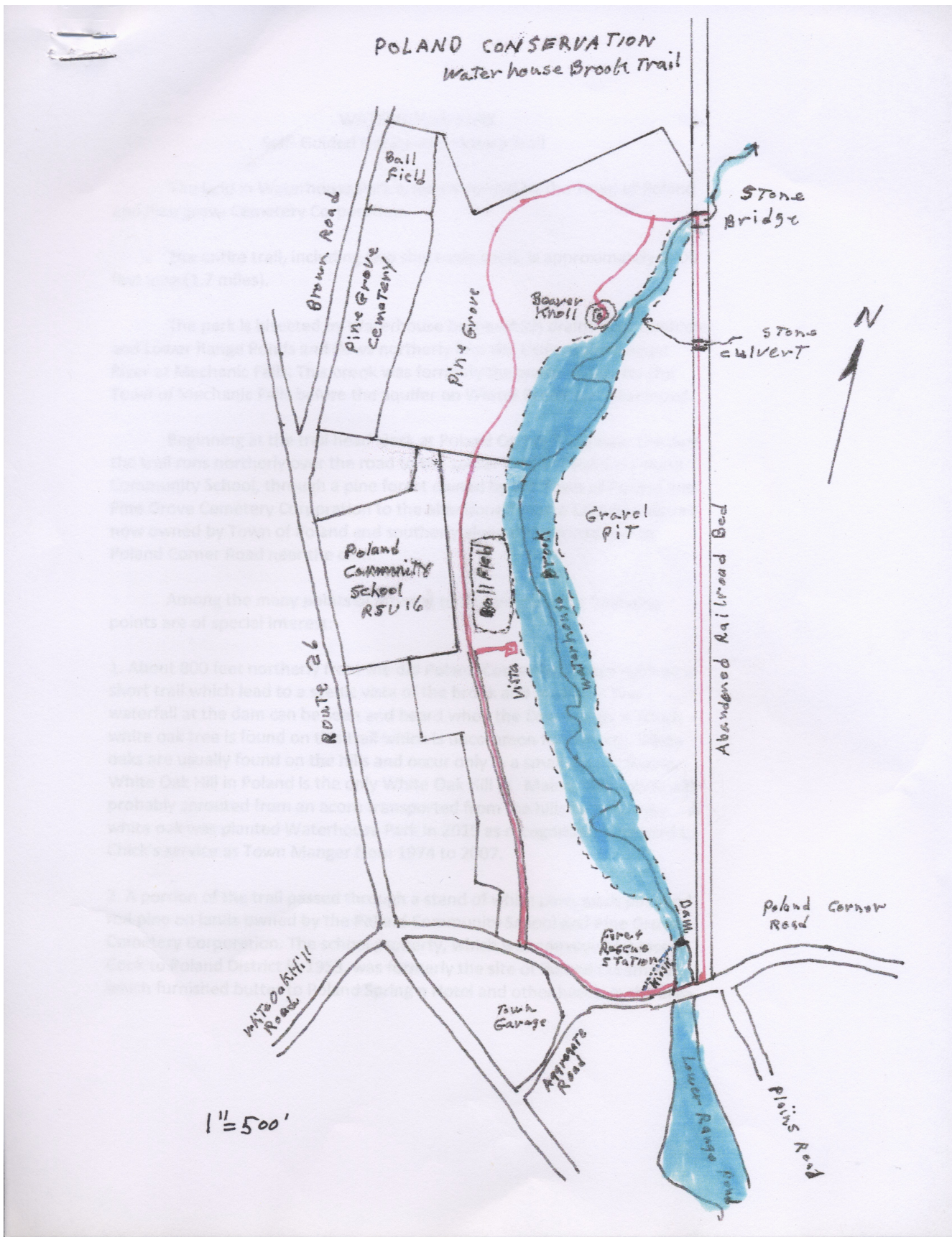
Permitted:

- walking, snowshoeing, Nordic skiing.
- Dogs on leash at all times.
- Bicycles on former railroad bed only.
- Snowmobiles on former railroad bed only.
- Fishing
- Picnicking
- Carry-in boat launch at designated area (directly above and west of the dam)
- Parking in designated areas only.
- Open dawn to dusk (special permit may be obtained for after dark nature study).
- Motorized recreational vehicles may be permitted only on the abandoned railroad bed.
- Hunting and use of fire arms may be permitted only along the railroad bed as posted.

Prohibited:

- No fires, smoking or camping
- No trash disposal (carry-in/carry-out)
- No fires, smoking or overnight camping
- No swimming or diving in pond above the dam

Waterhouse Park



Waterhouse Brook Conservation Area

prepared by

Alan Audet

There are many things to consider when assessing the Waterhouse Brook area for conservation needs. The habitat is decidedly different from most other places in Poland. The geological events that occurred in this area have helped to make for a fast moving shallow stream with high sandy banks, thus providing conditions that help to maintain (relatively speaking) a stable forest type. Here are some things to consider.

The sandy soils along the brook provide nesting habitat for Common Snapping and Eastern Painted turtles.

The brook remains open even in the coldest winters, providing water and feeding areas for a number of species, including North American River Otter, Beaver, Mallards, and Raccoon.

The backwater areas in the Meadow and near Beaver Knoll, provide safe environments for amphibians like Spring Peeper and Spotted Salamanders, to lay eggs in the spring.

The dam spillway increases oxygen to levels, in the stream, that would be difficult to maintain given the lack of rapids in the downstream area. This helps maintain our Brook Trout population that require more oxygen than other species of fish.

Small rocky areas along the streambed provide habitat for crayfish such as Northern or Virile Crayfish.

The pine grove contains three native species of pines, Red, Eastern White, and Pitch. This provides habitat for a number of bird species like Pine Warblers and Brown Creepers. The acidic sandy soil also supports unique plant species, including large numbers of Pink Lady's Slipper.

The forested edges, on both sides of the brook, serve as travel corridors for many different species of wildlife, allowing them access to the larger parcels nearby.

The shorelines of the brook serve as one long edge habitat. From an ecological standpoint, edge habitats tend to see a more diverse group of species, since it makes resources available from both habitat types. The addition of water only increases the diversity.

Species Lists

All species listed have been directly observed or captured on remote cameras during our ongoing naturalist survey, which began in 2017. The lists are living documents with many more species to be recorded. Fish Species are a combination of direct observation and data compiled by Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Waterhouse Brook trail

Androscoggin, Maine, US
149 plant & Animal species

Waterfowl

Canada Goose

Wood Duck

Mallard

American Black Duck

Grouse, Quail, and Allies

Ruffed Grouse

Wild Turkey

Shorebirds

American Woodcock

Solitary Sandpiper

Vultures, Hawks, and Allies

Turkey Vulture

Osprey

Broad-winged Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk

Kingfishers

Belted Kingfisher

Woodpeckers

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Downy Woodpecker

Pileated Woodpecker

Tyrant Flycatchers: Pewees, Kingbirds, and Allies

Eastern Phoebe

Great Crested Flycatcher

Jays, Magpies, Crows, and Ravens Blue Jay

American Crow

Common Raven

Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice

Black-capped Chickadee

Tufted Titmouse

Martins and Swallows

Bank Swallow

Nuthatches

Red-breasted Nuthatch

White-breasted Nuthatch

Tree creepers

Brown Creeper

Starlings and Mynas

European Starling

Catbirds, Mockingbirds, and Thrashers

Gray Catbird

Thrushes

Wood Thrush

American Robin

Finches, Euphonias, and Allies

Purple Finch

American Goldfinch

New World Sparrows

Chipping Sparrow

Song Sparrow

Swamp Sparrow

Eastern Towhee

Blackbirds

Red-winged Blackbird

Wood-Warblers

Ovenbird

Black-and-white Warbler

Common Yellowthroat

American Redstart

Northern Parula

Yellow Warbler

Chestnut-sided Warbler

Palm Warbler Pine Warbler

Yellow-rumped Warbler

Prairie Warbler

Black-throated Green Warbler

Cardinals, Grosbeaks, and Allies

Northern Cardinal

Indigo Bunting

Mammals

Eastern Coyote

Red Fox

Gray Fox

Bobcat *

Black Bear *

Raccoon

Fisher *

Mink

River Otter

White-tailed Deer

Snowshoe Hare

Porcupine

Red Squirrel

Gray Squirrel

Eastern Chipmunk

Flying Squirrel

Mouse

* Indicates transient species

Trees and Shrubs

Red Maple

Eastern White Pine

Red Pine

Pitch Pine

Eastern Hemlock

Quaking Aspen

Bear Oak

Red Oak

American Beech

White Birch

Speckled Alder
Elderberry
Striped Maple
Red Osier Dogwood
White AshStaghorn Sumac
Beaked Hazel
Wild Plum

Plants

Goldthread
Wintergreen
Canada Mayflower
Mayflower
Male-berry
Fringed Polygala
Nodding trillium
Purple Trillium
Canada Lily
Pippsissewa
Blue Toadflax
Jewelweed
Selfheal
Pink Lady's Slipper
Starflower
Indian Pipe
Jack-in-the Pulpit
Blue-bead Lily
Groundnut
Cardinal Flower
Sweet Fern
Red Clover
Dandelion
Bracken fern
Wild Sarsaparilla
White Goldenrod
Rabbit-Foot Clover
Sorrel
New England Aster
Queen Anne's Lace
Smartweed
Slender-leaved Agalinis
Sensitive Fern
Meadowsweet
False Solomon Seal (spp.)
Enchanters Nightshade (spp.)
Sulphur Cinquefoil

Reptile & Amphibians

Eastern Red-backed Salamander
Spotted Salamander
Wood frog
Spring Peeper
American Toad
Common Snapping Turtle
Painted Turtle

Fish

Brook Trout
Large-mouth Bass
Small-mouth Bass
Chain Pickerel
Yellow Perch
White Sucker
Fallfish
Golden Shiner

Insects

White Admiral
Monarch
Northern Pearly-eye
Antlion
Ebony Jewelwing

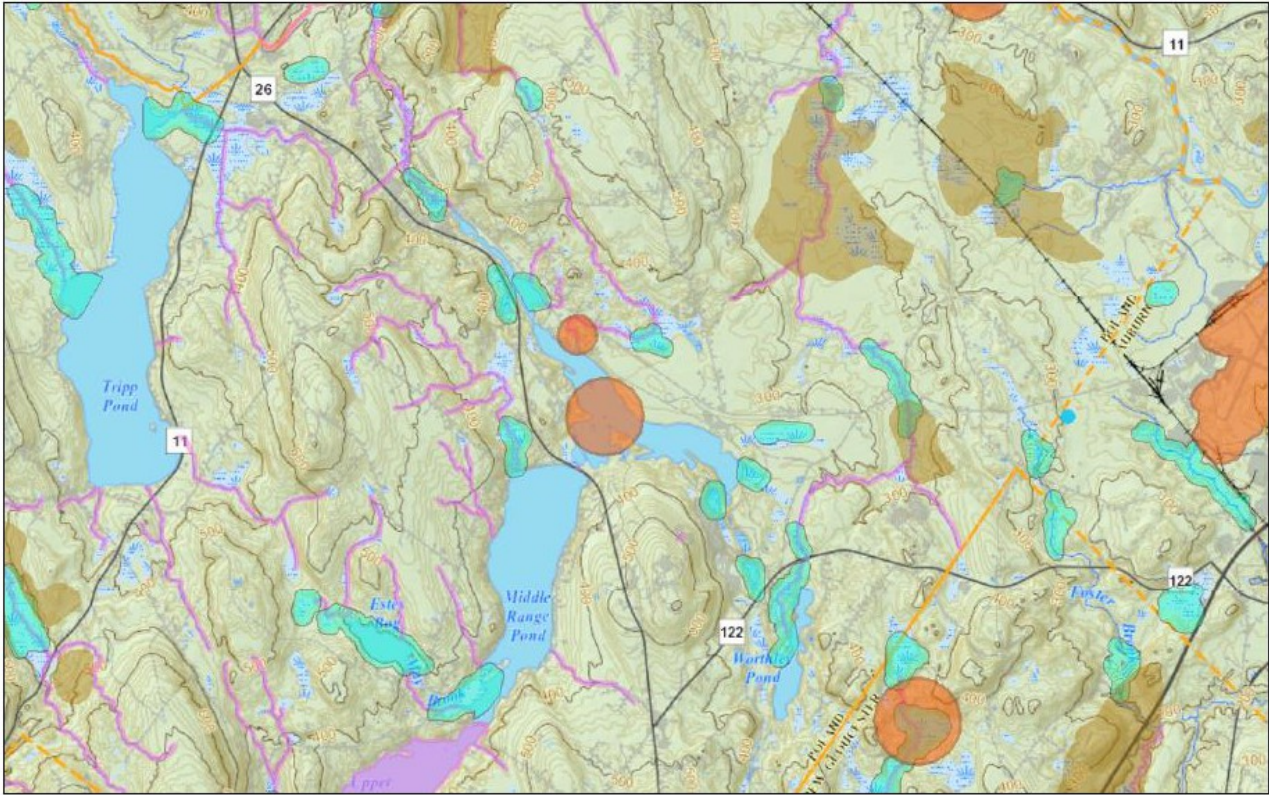
Invasive Species

Japanese Knotweed
Morrows Honeysuckle
Asiatic Bittersweet
Japanese Barberry
Multi-flora Rose

Helpful Links

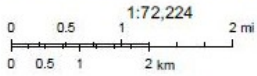
<https://webapps2.cgis-solutions.com/beginningwithhabitat/map2/>
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMZ9V6HrVLPI_Yo1

Beginning With Habitat



March 18, 2018

- Significant Vernal Pools
- Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat
- Deer Wintering Areas
- btrout
- ETSC Animal Habitat Buffers



Beginning with Habitat
Copyright 2016

WATERHOUSE PARK
Self- Guided Nature and History Trail

The land in Waterhouse Park is jointly owned by the Town of Poland and Pine grove Cemetery Corporation.

The entire trail, including two short side trails, is approximately 9200 feet long (1.7 miles).

The park is bisected by Waterhouse Brook which drains upper, middle and Lower Range Ponds and flows northerly into the Little Androscoggin River at Mechanic Falls. This brook was formerly the water source for the Town of Mechanic Falls before the aquifer on Winter Brook was developed.

Beginning at the trail head kiosk at Poland Corner Road near the dam the trail runs northerly over the road to the soccer field behind the Poland Community School, through a pine forest owned by the Town of Poland and Pine Grove Cemetery Corporation to the abandoned Maine Central Railroad now owned by Town of Poland and southerly along the railroad bed to Poland Corner Road near the dam.

Among the many points of interest to be observed the following points are of special interest:

1. About 800 feet northerly from the old Poland Corner Road turn right on a short trail which lead to a scenic vista of the brook and meadow. The waterfall at the dam can be seen and heard when the flow is high. A 6 inch white oak tree is found on this trail which is uncommon for this site. White oaks are usually found on the hills and occur only in a small area in Maine. White Oak Hill in Poland is the only White Oak Hill in Maine. This white oak probably sprouted from an acorn transported from the hills by a blue jay. A white oak was planted Waterhouse Park in 2015 as recognition of Richard L. Chick's service as Town Manger from 1974 to 2007.
2. A portion of the trail passed through a stand of white pine, pitch pine and red pine on lands owned by the Poland Community School and Pine Grove Cemetery Corporation. The school property, which was conveyed by Joseph Cook to Poland District in 1953, was formerly the site of Poland Creamery which furnished butter to Poland Spring n Hotel and other hotels in the area.

The land owned by the Pine Grove Cemetery Corporation was purchased in 1900 from James Goodall. Timber has been harvested several times in the last forty years. The predominant trees are white pine, pitch pine and occasional red pine. Some of the pitch pines are at least 150 years old. Pitch pines are unique in that they are resistant to fire as they get larger and will survive a forest fire which destroys other species, especially white pines. One of the largest pitch pines in Maine is located beside the brook just a few feet upstream from the bridge. This tree is 30 inches in diameter.

4. Beaver knoll side trail is located off the main trail about 100 feet before the bridge. This short trail runs southerly about 500 feet to a glacial kame which rises about 30 feet above the brook. Kames were formed by the receding glacier about 10,000 years ago. Most kames in this part of Maine have been mined for sand and gravel. Observe the beaver dam and beaver lodge on the brook and evidence where beavers had cut hardwoods on the knoll and dragged the trees down to the brook for building a dam and lodge and a source of winter food. The meadow is excellent habitat for many species of birds and aquatic animals.

Observe two very old white pines at the foot of the knoll by the brook. The larger pine is 43 inches D.B.H (diameter at breast height) and the smaller tree is 36 inches D.B.H. These pines are probably over 150 years old.

5. Granite block Bridge over Waterhouse Brook. This bridge was constructed in 1893 by Edge Moor Bridge Works of Portland for Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad and is 23 feet in length. This railroad was authorized by an Act of the Maine Legislature in 1891 to provide a railroad from Mechanic Falls in Minot to Hackett Farm in Auburn. This railroad was later leased to Maine Central Railroad for 999 years.

6. A split stone culvert is located under the railroad bed approximately 500 feet southerly from the bridge. This well-built culvert is 5 feet in height and 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ feet wide.

7. This short branch of the railroad was built about 1895 and ran from Auburn to Mechanic Falls until about the 1940's when it was abandoned and the track removed. The railroad bed from Poland Corner to the Mechanic Falls Town Line at Cousins Brook was purchased by the Town of Poland on October 1, 1979.

8. The first mill dam at the outlet of Lower Range Pond was built by Capt., George Waterhouse in 1793. The mill was sold to Robert Waterman and carried away by a freshet. Waterman sold the mill privilege to Jacob Rowe. The grist mill was built by the land proprietor, a Mr. Little, and later sold to Isaac Barton. In 1874 this mill privilege was sold to A. C. Dennison who owned a paper mill at Mechanic Falls. . The dam was conveyed to the Town of Poland by Ridgewood Maine Hydro Partners L.P on October 18, 2000. A goal of the Town is to construct a foot bridge across the dam to keep hikers from crossing the narrow bridge on Poland Corner Road and be able to see the scenic waterfalls.