

# RECREATION

## Recreation Programs

For a City of relatively small size, Portsmouth offers many diverse recreational opportunities for its residents. Managed through the City's Recreation Department, a number of year-round, diverse programs span a wide range of interests and abilities, from traditional sports leagues to organized day trips. In addition to meeting a variety of recreational needs, the Department strives to make its programs "available and affordable to all."

A full-time Recreation Director and Assistant Director direct a full time staff that includes supervisors at the Connie Bean Center, Spinnaker Point Adult Recreation Center, and the Indoor and Outdoor Pools. In addition, the Department has three full time Head Lifeguard positions (one currently vacant) and a part-time account clerk. Part time staff ranges from 45-60, and 15-30 work-study/interns, 15-20 summer staff, and hundreds of volunteer coaches rounding out the Department's human resources.

A range of activities for youth, adults, and families are offered, in addition to a summer camp program. The following is a partial list of the programs the department offers, according to information currently featured on the City's web site:

- Youth Programs: Whiffleball, T-Ball, Multisport, Hershey Track team, Girls Softball, Friday Fun Trips, Miniature Golf tour, Juniors Par 3 tour, Learn Golf/Life Skills, Fishing Trips, All Day Field Trips Week, Fall Soccer, Judo, Field Hockey, Instructional Baseball League, Fun and Games.
- Adult Programs: Serious Summer Basketball, Over the Hill Basketball, Spring Tennis Lessons, and Senior Exercise Class.
- Family Programs: Annual Easter Egg Hunt, Fireworks Display, Two Great Trips for the Entire Family, and Mother/Son Mother's Day Dance.
- Camps: April School Vacation Day camp, Golf, Field Hockey, Boys and Girls Basketball, Volleyball, Girls Softball, Seacoast United 2003 Portsmouth Soccer Camp, Skyhawks 2003 Sports Programs for Kids, KL Tennis Camps and Lessons, Recreation Camp Funstuff 2003.
- Pool-Related Programs: The City offers numerous swimming, water exercise, water safety, water polo, and other water-related classes and programs at its indoor and outdoor pool facilities.

## Recreation Facilities

The City of Portsmouth maintains well over a dozen neighborhood parks and playgrounds, which are distributed throughout the City; a number of Citywide parks and playgrounds (including South Playground across from City Hall, and Peirce Island); an indoor recreation facility for adults as well as one for youth; a skateboard park; outdoor and indoor pools; little league fields; and multi-purpose play fields. In addition, multi-purpose fields are also located at the City's

schools, and handicapped accessible playgrounds are located at each of the City’s three elementary schools.

The City’s parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities are listed in Table 98, and mapped on Map 17 in the Natural Resources and Open Space section of the Master Plan.

**Table 98: Recreation Facilities, Parks, and Playgrounds**  
(including School-owned facilities)

Recreation Facilities	Parks & Playgrounds
Connie Bean Community Center	Aldrich Park
Spinnaker Point (Adult) Recreation Center	Big Rock Park
Greenleaf Recreation Center	Cater Park
Indoor Pool	Connie Bean Playground
Peirce Island Outdoor Pool	Four Tree Island Picnic Area
Peirce Island Boat Launch	Goodwin Park
Four Tree Island Recreation Area	Hislop Park
Leary Field	Hanscom Park
Alumni Field (next to Middle School)	Haven Park
Clough Field	Haven School Playground
Hislop Little League	Langdon Park
Central Little League Field (next to Leary Field)	Lafayette Park
	Maple Haven Park
	Maynard Park
	Pannaway Park
	Pine Street Park
	Peirce Island Park
	Prescott Park
	Rock Street Park
	South Playground
	The Plains

Source: City of Portsmouth

The following section lists the major recreational facilities in the city along with a brief description of what each has to offer:

*Spinnaker Point Adult Recreation Center*

The Spinnaker Point Adult Recreation Center is located on Spinnaker Way and includes:

- A full court gymnasium,
- Indoor track 1/12 of a mile with rubberized flooring and banked corners,
- Expanded cardiovascular room with treadmills, lifecycles, elliptical machines, stairmaster and rowing machines, separate weight room with free weights and body masters exercise machines,
- 50-foot four lane indoor pool and hot tub,
- Sauna in both men’s and women’s locker rooms and

- An all-purpose gym.

In addition, two large rooms (one large wooden dance floor room and one carpeted exercise room) that are available for use when not scheduled with activities. Membership to the Spinnaker Point Adult Recreation Center is available only for the residents of Portsmouth.

### *Connie Bean Community Center*

The Connie Bean Community Center is located on Daniel Street and is predominantly a recreation center for children of all ages. This very popular facility is used during after school hours and during school vacations, and offers a basketball program, special events, and general space to “hang out” and socialize. The Center also hosts other community organizations such as the Portsmouth Judo Club, Ballet New England, and the Seacoast African American Cultural Center. Special events, forums, and community gatherings likewise take place here. The gym is available for performances and rehearsals, and a small conference room is available for group meetings of up to 10 people.

The City recently completed major improvements at the Center to make it ADA accessible.

### *Greenleaf Recreation Center*

The Greenleaf Recreation Center is a facility used almost exclusively for adult and youth organized seasonal programs and where all adult day trips depart and return to. It is open seven days a week to rent for programs, classes, birthday parties, and different functions. The center offers the following amenities:

- An outdoor skateboard park,
- A gymnasium,
- An outdoor basketball court,
- A game room (ping pong, air hockey, foosball, bumper pool, and board games) and
- A separate meeting room with kitchen facilities.

### *Municipal Pool*

The City’s indoor pool is located on Andrew Jarvis Drive adjacent to the Portsmouth High School and is open to both residents and non-residents for a fee. Swim classes such as Red Cross Learn-To-Swim, lifeguard training, junior lifeguard/Guard Start training, adapted aquatics for special needs children, water safety/swim lesson instructor, and adult swim lessons are available. There are different times set aside for different groups such as adult swim, open swim, and senior citizen swim.

The outdoor pool is located on Peirce Island, and is only open during the summer months. A new parking area in support of the pool was recently completed, as were improvements to the pool apron and fencing.

### *Prescott Park*

Prescott Park is located at the edge of the Piscataqua River and across from Strawberry Banke Museum. Two sisters, Josie and Sarah Prescott, donated the Park around the turn of the century to the City of Portsmouth. The popular waterfront park features flower gardens, including large demonstration beds where many varieties of flowers are shown each summer. The Park is also host to the Prescott Park Arts Festival – an outdoor summer festival held during July and August of every year.

### *Peirce Island*

Peirce Island is a 27-acre city owned island which is home to two playgrounds, walking trails, picnic areas, the municipal boat launch, and the state fish pier, as well as the City's outdoor pool. In 1999, the City developed a Master Plan for the Island, and improvements have been implemented on an annual basis since that time. The City's current focus is on the development of walking trails, scenic overlooks, and other amenities on the Island's eastern end.

## **Recent and Ongoing Capital Improvements**

Portsmouth has completed major rehabilitations of its parks and playgrounds throughout the city over the last six years. The following parks and playgrounds have been upgraded: Cater, Goodwin, Haven School, Lafayette, Pine Street, Rock Street, Pannaway, South, Hislop, Hanscom, Maynard, Big Rock, and Rock Street. New handicapped accessible playgrounds were installed at the City's three elementary schools—Dondero, New Franklin, and Little Harbour—several years ago. Maple Haven and The Plains are the only remaining playgrounds that have not undergone major upgrades. \$25,000 is budgeted for improvements to the Maple Haven Playground in FY 2004. In addition, on-going improvements are being completed at Goodwin and Haven Parks, where conservation treatments of outdoor sculptures are being executed. A Master Plan for Hislop Park in Atlantic Heights is likewise being developed and implemented.

Recreation projects included in the 2004-2009 Capital Improvement Program are:

- **On-Going Implementation of the Peirce Island Master Plan:** As aforementioned, this is a multi-year project. The City is focusing on developing trails, overlooks, and other amenities on the island's eastern end, as well as improvements to the outdoor pool facility.
- **Ledgewood Manor Park:** The St. Nicholas Greek Church has leased a parcel of land adjacent to Ledgewood Manor apartments for development of a park targeted to Ledgewood residents. Design was completed in 2000, and scheduled improvements include regrading, drainage, lighting, and installation of picnic tables, benches, trash receptacles, and the like. The project is awaiting funding through a public-private partnership.
- **North Mill Pond Pedestrian and Bike Pathway:** Pursuant to the recommendations of the North Mill Pond Feasibility Study, construction of a 2,500 foot linear path along the McDonough Street shore is planned. Easements from property owners are required prior to commencement of construction.
- **Pease International Tradeport Athletic Fields:** This project is a cooperative venture between the City and the Pease Development Authority to identify and secure long term

leases to sites that may be suitable for multi-purpose play fields.

- **Reclamation of Former Stump Dump for Recreational Use:** As part of a larger project that would close the stump dump in accordance with the requirements of the NH Department of Environmental Services, the site would be leveled and capped and converted to recreational use.

## **Recreation Needs**

As evidenced by the above, the City is actively addressing many of the recreational needs of its residents via programmatic initiatives and facilities improvements. Future needs cited by the Recreation Department include multi-purpose playing fields for softball, baseball, lacrosse, and soccer, as well as indoor basketball courts and meeting rooms, and outdoor basketball and tennis courts.