

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF BEAVERTAIL
STATE PARK, JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND

It is the intention of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (“DEM”) to obtain 170 acres of federal surplus land on the Beavertail area of Jamestown, Rhode Island. The Department has worked with the Town of Jamestown (“Town”) toward creation of a Beavertail State Park which would be made up of the surplus land and 26 additional acres now owned or controlled by the Town. In moving toward creation of the park the Department and the Town have analyzed the characteristics of the land in question and have drawn plans for a park which will meet the needs of users while preserving the fragile ecological, scenic and historical characteristics of Beavertail.

This plan is explained and described in the attached documents, known as the Beavertail Descriptive Plan, which is attached hereto as Exhibit A, and incorporated herein by reference. The Beavertail Descriptive Plan portrays the size of the Park, and describes the manner in which it is to be developed. The Beavertail Descriptive Plan includes the following:

1. Maps (1-11) and narrative statements which describe the physical characteristics of the site including topography, slope, soils, vegetation, hydrology, geology, existing roads and existing buildings.
2. A proposed development plan (Map 12) which is drawn from and supported by the findings.

Analysis of the physical and biological characteristics of the Beavertail Peninsula, as described and portrayed in Exhibit A, compels the following findings and conclusions relative to the peninsula and its development as a park:

1. Topography

The topography of Beavertail creates quite a subtle landform except for certain places along the shoreline where the land drops dramatically 20 to 30 feet to the ocean. The rest of the land gently rolls up to a slight crown 72 feet above sea level. This crown unfortunately peaks just to the west of the main road so any view of the ocean from the main road is completely cut off. Any conception of being on a peninsula with ocean on three sides is totally diminished until you reach the very tip where the topography and vegetation finally open up to the ocean.

One solution that would allow a park visitor to know what type of landform he was Approaching would be to pull the main road up and over the crown. This would enable a commanding view of the ocean as well as experiencing the landscape as it rolled down to the rocky shoreline, yet would have an acceptably small impact on existing soils and vegetation.

2. Slope

The slope is not a major development factor of Beavertail except for along the Shoreline. For most of the land this slope ranges from 0-8 percent but as it was pointed out in topography, the drop to the ocean along the shoreline can range from 15 percent to well over 60 percent. The western shoreline is the one that presents the most problems. The nature of the geology (see sheet 6 geology) plus the constant battering from the wind and sea has caused this abrupt change from a gently rolling landscape to the rocky shoreline cliffs.

As spectacular as these cliffs may be, they also present some dangers to people who happen to step carelessly. To combat this, the actual shore trail must be rebuilt on only stable areas where soil and rock erosion is minimal. The trail also must be incorporated into the slope in certain places to act as retaining walls and thus reduce soil erosion.

Another precautionary measure which must be taken is to locate any activities, such as picnicking where small children may wander about, in other areas that present no hazards.

3. Soils

Within the soils found at Beavertail some have very slow permeability in the substratum. (Mapping units 29A, 29B, 48). This will create problems locating septic tank absorption fields.

Location of any sanitary facility must be within the Newport series (Mapping units 10A, 10B, 10C) and then only if the proper percolation tests show suitability.

Another factor to deal with when working with the soils is that Beavertail is covered with a very thin layer of top soil. This can be easily compacted if not properly managed. Any amount of severe compaction would result in loss of plant material and eventually soil erosion. To eliminate any unnecessary soil compaction the existing roads must be utilized to the maximum extent possible when developing the new road system.

The overall soil configuration limits high intensity public use because of restrictions on disposal of wastes and because of potential impacts of overuse on vegetation.

4. Vegetation

The vegetation, as shown on sheet 4 is broken into three distinct classes, high vegetation, low vegetation and field vegetation. Field vegetation is currently the most predominant on the proposed park site but is now undergoing a field succession process that allows the growth of the lower plants (bayberry, wild cherry and red cedar).

Since field succession is a natural process, no major steps will be taken to prevent the land from reverting back to a denser vegetation. Some measures though will be initiated to assure optical views of the ocean and any growth of higher vegetation (8 ft. and above) would serve to frame these views.

Rare and endangered plant species are present on the site. Already there have been two site visits with specialists to determine the exact location of such plant material. Proposed roads and paths have been altered so as not to jeopardize their existence. All proposed improvements must be reviewed to insure that no rare plant species are adversely affected.

5. Hydrology

The Hydrology of Beavertail which is illustrated on sheet 5 is relatively simple. There are two small wetlands, one of which is drained by intermittent streams. The remainder of the site drainage is unorganized and flows directly into the Bay. The site lacks significant fresh water resources; thus development is limited by water supply. The high water table in and surrounding the wetlands excludes construction or major development of those areas. The road which travels across the intermittent streams follows the paths of existing roads so that the necessary culverts must just be retained; wetlands will not be filled. Picnic and parking areas in the plan are not to be located on wet soils. Much of the site can accept on-site sewage disposal; any future rest room facilities will be located on suitable soils.

6. Geology

The geology of the site as described on sheet 6 consists of schistose conglomerate and sandstone bedrock which is overlain with 15-20 feet of glacial till which includes acres of gravel and sand. The exposed bedrock around the shoreline is steeply sloping along the west shore and slopes more gradually on the east shore. In each case the rock ledges which have been eroded by wave action present attractive scenic views.

7. Existing Roads

An important piece of the inventory stage was the mapping of existing roads (sheet 7). This is because the park development must minimize any unnecessary removal of plant material and cause the least disturbance to the soils. The existing road beds which were mostly gravel and left behind by the Navy served to determine how a new park loop road could be incorporated to circulate people through different areas of the site. The field roads, most of them made by fishermen, have also been utilized to lay out a 2 mile bicycle route.

Policy and Regulations

Based on the foregoing, the Department of Environmental Management adopts the following regulations which shall govern the development and operation of Beavertail State Park:

1. Except as specifically provided for in the attached Beavertail Descriptive Plan, roads and bikeways at the Park shall be constructed only on roadways existing at the time of the State's acquisition of the land.

2. Vehicular traffic, including bicycles, shall be restricted to roads, bikeways, and parking lots. Parking shall only be allowed on paved or gravelled areas specifically denoted as parking areas.

3. To the maximum extent possible, pedestrian traffic will be limited to the pedestrian pathways provided for in the Plan.

4. The total parking capacity shall be limited to 150 cars, dispersed among five separated parking areas of 30 cars capacity each.

5. Vehicular traffic is to be managed in such a way as to discourage or eliminate traffic from Beavertail Point, in the vicinity of the existing light house.

6. No rest rooms shall be constructed except on soils marked as Newport Series, and only then when appropriate percolation tests show suitability of the soil for sewage disposal systems.

7. Management of the Park shall be conducted in such a manner as to encourage dispersion of visitors around the park, rather than their concentration in any particular locality.

8. No development of any sort whatsoever shall be allowed in the large open spaces provided for and depicted on Sheet No. 12 of Exhibit A, These acres shall be preserved for natural plant succession and wildlife habitat.

9. There shall be allowed at no time overnight camping within Beavertail State Park.

10. The overriding principle of the Park's development, operation and management shall at all times be the restoration and preservation of the natural features of Beavertail Peninsula.

11. An Advisory Committee shall be constituted as follows:

The Advisory Committee shall comprise five (5) members. Three of its members shall be selected and appointed by the governing body of the Town of Jamestown, by whatever process that body sees fit. One of its members shall be chosen by the Director of the Department of Environmental Management, or its successor agency, if any. The fifth member shall be mutually chosen by the Town and DEM, shall be a citizen of Rhode Island not a resident, permanent or seasonal, of Jamestown, and shall be knowledgeable in matters of environmental protection and preservation.

12. The Director of DEM shall consult with the Advisory Committee not less frequently than twice annually regarding the operating of Beavertail State Park, and in any event shall consult with the Advisory Committee before making any policy or development decisions with respect to such Park.

13. The Director of DEM shall consult with the Advisory Committee prior to seeking to amend, through the procedures provided in the Administrative Procedures Act, R.I.G.L. Chapter 42-35, any part of these regulations.

14. The development, operation, and management of Beavertail State Park shall at all times strictly comply with these Regulations, and Exhibit A attached hereto.