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UNH Announces Plans for Mendums Pond Area Enhancements

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DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire proposes to enhance the recreational and educational opportunities at its campus recreation area on Mendum’s Pond in Barrington.

“UNH is sensitive to its responsibility as a steward of this resource. The proposed improvements will enhance the opportunity for Barrington residents, students, faculty and staff to experience this special place while preserving the resources for educational and research activity,” said Paul Chamberlin, executive director of UNH Facilities Design and Construction.

Although the property is mostly undeveloped, UNH maintains a 200-acre recreation area on the shore that includes picnic tables, two open-air pavilions, a playground and small floating dock. UNH also maintains sailing center for the UNH sailing team that consists of two docks and a boat house.

The university has worked closely with the NH Department of Environmental Services on its proposal, including insuring that the two perched beaches set back from the shoreline are in accordance with DES criteria and provide the appropriate shoreline buffer. UNH planners have walked the site with a representative of the DES Wetlands Bureau and submitted the plans to the Barrington Conservation Commission, whose comments have been incorporated into the proposal.

UNH also has been working with an outside consultant to guide planning efforts and insure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

UNH’s immediate plans encompass constructing two perched beaches (although only one at this time) on the lower end of the lake to provide safe swimming spaces. These sand beaches would not be visible from the shoreline as a barrier of vegetation and landforms at least 15 feet wide would stand between the shoreline and beaches.

In the future, UNH plans to add a general-purpose building for canoe and kayak storage, caretaker quarters, and activity space. This building would be located beyond the setback requirements mandated by the Shoreline Protection Act. Designated parking is planned, and the existing canoe/kayak dock will be relocated to better fit with the overall environmental setting of the area. UNH also plans to remove a boat shed and ramp on the shoreline, and a dilapidated caretaker cabin.
UNH has kept not only abutters to the university’s property informed, it has insured that those residents who do not meet the legal definition of an abutter -- but who would have an interest the university’s plans -- were aware of the proposal.

“It is important to us that the residents of Mendum’s Pond understand that we not only have the educational interests of UNH in mind when making improvements to the area, but that we have the interests of our neighbors in mind. We truly value the input of those who are so acutely aware of what this area has to offer to the university and Barrington communities,” Chamberlin said.

The university intends to keep all interested parties informed of its proposed enhancements at Mendum’s Pond, many of which are in the long-term.

The university will formally present its plans for enhancements to the NH Department of Environmental Services Tuesday, Sept. 2, 2003, at 7 p.m., at the Barrington Elementary School. This is a public hearing held by DES pursuant to the university’s application for a wetlands permit. Anyone interested in learning more about the UNH plans for this unique site are welcome to attend the public hearing at the Barrington Elementary School.

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