

Castine Community Park – Frequently Asked Questions

What is going on at the meadow at Court and Spring Streets?

Castine received a Community Grant from T-Mobile to bring multiple community interests together, specifically to utilize the open area on the town-owned water department lot to encourage enjoyment of outdoor spaces, promote reading, and support native plantings. A path that is easily walkable by children and seniors alike will feature StoryWalk platforms to hold children's books, and pollinator nooks and shrubs to enhance the local ecological aspect of the area. Benches will allow all visitors to enjoy the views, and future programming will allow organizations and volunteer groups to share natural and cultural history of the area. The meandering path will leave much of the meadow intact, maintaining the existing feel of the area.

What is a StoryWalk?

A StoryWalk is an exciting, self-guided outdoor adventure that brings a story to life! Along the looped pathway, panels along 20 locations show a page from a story. Each story is designed for multigenerational use with an emphasis on families with young children. To follow the story, plan on 20 to 30 minutes to complete the walk. Stories will change monthly from April until December, starting in October 2025. It will be open from dawn to dusk. For more information, see: <https://witherlelibrary.net/castine-community-storywalk/>

Will events be held on the site?

Yes, community-oriented events are encouraged! Plans should be made in coordination with Town staff.

What about parking?

We expect most people to walk to the area, but the current "pull-in" areas along Court Street can continue to accommodate visitors who arrive by car.

Will the path be suitable for wheelchairs?

The path maintains a modest gradient, and is made of a mix of packed gravel and grit, that is easy to walk on and suitable for strollers, but is not ADA compliant and may not be suitable for wheelchairs.

Will bicycles and dogs be allowed?

Bicycles should be parked at the entrance, while dogs will be allowed on leash.

Will you provide trash cans?

No. Like other areas in Castine, the area will post a "carry-in/carry-out" rule, and be periodically monitored for trash.

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Will this be a no-smoking area?

Yes. Signage will include a “no smoking” symbol.

Will native plantings be identified with signage?

Yes. Small signs will be placed in Spring to identify common, latin and indigenous names.

How will the area be maintained?

The Town will continue to ensure the mowing of the meadow areas annually. A volunteer team (Friends of the Meadow) will carry out pruning and mulching of the shrubs and pollinator beds seasonally, while Town staff will periodically cut back grasses/growth in hard to mow areas. During the first two seasons, watering of new plantings will be organized by Town staff.

Can you prevent hunting on the lot?

State law allows the Town to designate the lot as a no-hunting area. Signage will be posted on the lot perimeter.

What about the sign that indicates the area is a historic grave site?

While developing the concept for the project we spent several months exploring the accuracy of the signage on site and related concerns. The sign that says soldiers were buried there is not correct; the sign should be located near Dyces Head. There is considerable documentation to support this understanding, and re-placement (or supplemental information) may be considered as part of a wider review of the 125-year old tourist signage around town. In order to consider other risks of the site being a gravesite location, we consulted with Castine’s Historic Society, Maine’s Historic Preservation Committee, and a state-recommended archaeologist. In doing so, we explored written reports, maps, and LiDar radar of the site. Not finding any compelling evidence of specific gravesites on the site, we proceeded by having an archaeologist on-site at the start of work, and on-call in case of unexpected findings. During digging of the path, a few deer bones were unearthed.

What do you know about previous use of the site?

The site has been disturbed in recent decades when tubewells were dug in the 1980s and then in 1990s when pipes were laid to bring water from newer wells on the other side of Court Street to the water treatment facility on the lower side of the lot. Materials were also dumped on the site from the Golf Club, along with construction debris from repairs to Maine Street and Court Street. Likely use in the 1800s includes plowing / animal grazing.

Other questions? Contact – townoffice@castine.me.us