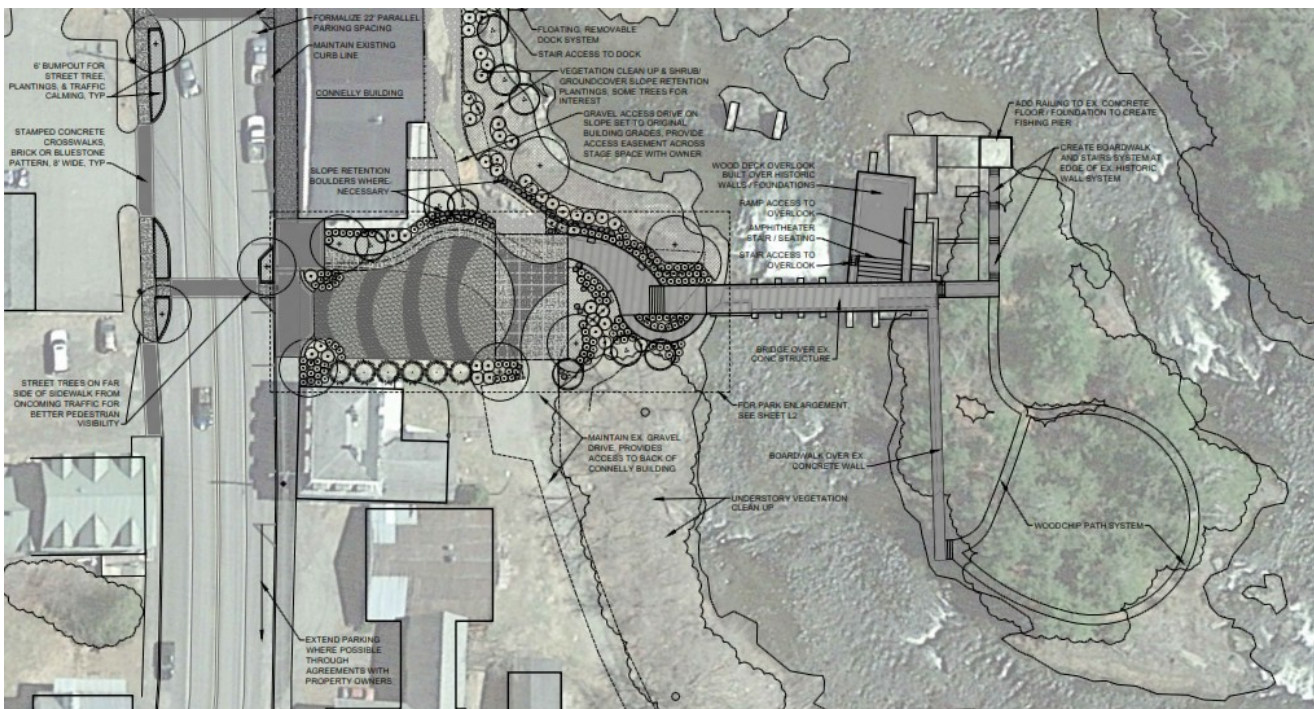




Town of Island Falls *Growing Into Modern Times*

As we begin planning to celebrate our 150th anniversary, we are reminded that the Town of Island Falls was once the leading industrial center in Aroostook County. It was home of the one of the nation's largest tanneries. The Northern Woodenware Co. provided clothes pins to Sears Roebuck and wood for Steinway pianos. The town's namesake island located in the middle of the Mattawamkeag River which bisects the center of our village, was the site of a hydroelectric station providing electricity to a sawmill and power for electric lights. Over time, the agricultural industry grew and the town became known for its starch production -- originally using local potatoes. However, the industries eventually left, and it is now time for us to look forward and plan for the future. Through the development of our Comprehensive Plan, we are attempting to reestablish ourselves as a recreational center, emphasizing the town's natural beauty that enticed Theodore Roosevelt to visit, launch his canoe below the island, travel down the river to Mattawamkeag Lake, and camp (along with his friend and guide Bill Sewall).

One of the Plan's projects is to convert this historic island into a community park. The park will not only enhance our community, but also become a tourist attraction and promote new businesses (restaurant, motel, guide service, etc.). We believe that through this and other projects our community will grow and ultimately attract a new forest products or agricultural employer. LARK Architects have completed drawings for the park.



As you can see, this is a huge project! But, we can do it through a series of small incremental steps. As we discussed during the Selectmen's Meeting where the project was introduced, the first step is to build the bridge and deck. We are working to obtain a grant to cover the engineering design. We will need further grant money for construction. Most importantly, however, we will need volunteers to help clear the brush, clean the island, help plant the new shrubs, set up the picnic tables, and do general labor.

Our town has a vision -- *Island Falls: An historic community with a distinctive heritage, growing into modern times*. The island park is an opportunity to connect us with the town's heritage and history, specifically as it relates to the structures that were on the island and nearby banks. Few of our young people have much understanding of the island and the falls' significance in the town's development.

This project is one of several proposed through our Comprehensive Plan aimed at revitalizing our community, and making it once again a desirable location to visit and live.

Tony

Anthony Binotto

Selectman – Town of Island Falls