

Abenaki Ski Area 4-Season Lodge

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Current Conditions



Top: Abenaki Lodge in 1940. Bottom: Abenaki Lodge in 2013

Abenaki Ski Area will be entering its 79th season in December of 2014 and is currently the oldest small ski area in the United States. After 79 seasons, the last 10 of which have seen significant and sustained growth and renewal, Abenaki has outgrown its aging and decaying lodge. This proposal seeks to provide a solution by building a code-compliant lodge with sufficient space for current and future needs.

Abenaki Ski Area epitomizes grassroots community skiing and provides a low cost recreational outlet for families during the winter months. Along with the Pop Whalen Arena and the XC Ski Trails at Abenaki, the area becomes the heart of the community during the winter. The unique community skiing found at Abenaki has been featured in POWDER Magazine, The NH Union Leader, "America's First Resort" Publication and even in a Warren Miller video contest.

The existing Abenaki Lodge was constructed from recycled lumber from the Ann Inn (site of Cate Park) in 1940 and the current facility maintenance needs are beyond routine maintenance and upkeep. In addition, the lodge is undersized for current use at Abenaki, and most seating is located outside of the building on picnic tables. The building has numerous code issues that this project seeks to resolve.

During special events, there is simply not enough room in the lodge to accommodate users and spectators. The lodge is often messy and smelly as there is no room to store ski bags and no room to change, so users simply change in the middle of the lodge, leaving wet ski clothes to dry near the woodstove. Many people change in the parking lot, creating a safety hazard. In fact, in 2014 we had an incident in which a young skier changing at their car in the parking lot was struck by a vehicle in a hit and run accident.

There is only one restroom in the lodge which is insufficient for current use. The Ski Patrol room doubles as a storage room, so equipment and gear often has to be moved when attending to an injured skier. The lodge does not have adequate food prep or storage areas, so menu items are very limited. Parents and grandparents who drop kids off at the ski area often choose not to stay and watch or visit with other parents because there is not adequate seating space. There is just no room.

Despite the challenges of the lodge, the ski area has gone through a renaissance in the past nine years. The upsurge

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The lodge on a busy night.

in popularity is attributable to our snowmaking capability, a new focus on building bigger and better terrain parks, ski team development and increased marketing success.

The staff continue to focus on Abenaki's strengths as we work to build and improve our operation here. While Abenaki does not offer the vertical drop or hundreds of acres of terrain that our larger ski areas in the state do, it does have some unique characteristics that make it stand out as a great recreational destination:

- **Learning area:** our bunny slope and low-speed kiddie tow provide an exceptional environment for lessons and first time skiers.
- **Terrain Park:** in the past 4 years we have tripled the size and variety of the Terrain Park and we now have 4 park jumps, 4 rails, 2 boxes, a barrel hit and a culvert slide. Each year we continue to create new and exciting elements that are attracting freestyle skiers and riders from further away.
- **Teams:** The Alpine Racing and Freestyle Teams expanded their rosters this year. Each team offers professional coaching and training at a low cost. The Freestyle division hosted their second national circuit meet, Abopalooza Big Air and Slopetyle, which drew 90+ competitors and teams from throughout New England.
- **Training Ground:** Brewster Academy continues to use the hill as the practice hill for their alpine racing team, and we are in discussions with them to have the Snowboard team use the hill on a regular basis as well.
- **Cost:** our low cost makes Abenaki accessible to a population that is not currently served by our larger (and much more expensive) ski areas. New rate structures have non-residents paying the true cost for each visit, while residents will continue to enjoy historically affordable rates.
- **Convenience:** For Wolfeboro-area users, Abenaki provides a very convenient location for recreation and exercise, with popular after-school and weekend hours.

In 2014, Abenaki Ski Area once again had it's most successful season to date. With special events such as Abopalooza Freestyle Ski Meet, Ski Races, Big Air, Winter Carival, Abenaki Climb and Grind Rail Jam and expanded Ski Team use of the mountain, our visitation rates rose by 28% from the previous year.

- 2003-2004: Little snow, never opened
- 2004-2005: 943 skiers and riders
- 2005-2006: Little snow, never opened
- 2006-2007: 1,402 skiers and riders



Single restroom not to code or ADA accessible.



Ski Patrol room doubles as storage and dish washing area.



Main room only 440 sq. feet with seating for only 12. Multiple code issues presented by deteriorating building shell, wood stove and lack of space.

- 2007 Temporary Snowmaking Installed
- 2007-2008: 1,995 skiers and riders (42% increase)
- 2008-2009: 2,730 skiers and riders (37% increase)
- 2009-2010: 3,320 skiers and riders (22% increase)
- 2010-2011: 4,100 skiers and riders (23% increase)
- 2011 Permanent Snowmaking Installed
- 2011-2012: 4,719 skiers and riders (15% increase)
- 2012-2013: 5,501 skiers and riders (17% increase)
- 2013-2014: 7,017 skiers and riders (28% increase)



Crowds of spectators at annual BIG AIR competition. Special events regularly draw 300-500 spectators.

Highlights of the 2014 season:

- Coverage of Abenaki in POWDER Magazine, a national ski publication.
- Video entry in Warren Miller Hometown Hills Video Contest. Progressed to regional finals as of April 2014
- Abopalooza Freestyle Ski meet that attracted 90 competitors in Aerials and Slopestyle from throughout New England.
- Abenaki Climb and Grind Spring Rail Jam that attracted 40 competitors from throughout New England on a cutting-edge rail garden course.
- Open for three weekends in April, thanks to plentiful snow and a donation from the Friends of Abenaki. This is our latest close date ever.
- First Annual Ski A Thon that raised **\$20,000** for new lodge in one hour.

Solution

In partnership with the non-profit Friends of Abenaki, design and build a 4 season, fully accessible and code-compliant lodge that will accommodate Abenaki's future growth and serve as vital community recreation center for all ages.

Process Timeline

2011

In 2011, The Town contracted with Horizons Engineering to conduct a Site Planning process that identified needs and solutions at the Pop Whalen/Abenaki recreational site. Many stakeholders were involved in that process, including the following groups:

- Friends of Abenaki
- Wolfeboro XC Ski Association



Abenaki has 5 trails, 2 rope tow lifts, glade skiing, lit trails for night skiing and a terrain park with 4 jumps, 2 rails, 2 boxes a barrel hit and culvert slide.

- Kingswood High School
- Brewster Academy
- Parks and Recreation Staff
- Back Bay Youth Hockey
- General Public

The stakeholders identified goals for improving the facilities on the site, many of which are beyond their useful life and are in dire need of either repair or demolition. The priority projects that were identified are as follows:

1. Replace 6 Parks Maintenance Sheds with a single Maintenance Building. This project got underway in 2013 and will be complete in 2014.
2. Replace the deteriorating and overcrowded Abenaki Lodge. The replacement building would also incorporate functions of the existing Nordic Hut.
3. Improve traffic flow in the parking lot by adding a drop-off area for the ski area.
4. Explore options for locker room additions for the rink. This is currently being explored by Back Bay Youth Hockey and Brewster Academy, with the cooperation of the Parks and Recreation Department. At present, the concept is to raise private money through these 2 groups to fund this project.
5. Identify areas for future trail development and additional lift capacity.

2012

- Planned Phase 1 of Abenaki improvements: Construction of 3000 sq. ft. Maintenance Building to replace 6 deteriorating Maintenance Sheds (6 sheds combined 1656 sq. ft.).
 - Conducted Soil testing and developed site plan
 - Developed Conceptual Plans (SFC Engineering)
 - Funds approved March 2013
- Sought money in 2013 budget for planning of Phase 2: Construction of Abenaki Lodge. Funds would be used to conduct building design process, wetlands permitting, soil testing, survey and existing conditions drawings. Funds approved in March 2013.
- Through regular attendance and communication at meetings, Friends of Abenaki agrees to make development of the new lodge their number one priority (ahead of installation of additional snowmaking or additional lifts)



Abenaki Freestyle Ski Team has over 30 members, with another 20 on the Race Team. Team members compete on the local, state and national level.



The expanded terrain park is a hit with local kids and brave adults, and has attracted skiers from throughout the state.

2013

- Established Abenaki Lodge Building Committee (a sub-committee of the Friends of Abenaki), composed of:

- Bill Swaffield, President, Friends of Abenaki
- Craig Garland, Chief of Abenaki Ski Patrol
- Andre DeBeer, Liaison to Abenaki Ski Teams (racing and freestyle) and Brewster Ski Team
- Vaune Dugan, Architect
- Ethan Hipple, Director, Parks and Recreation



Snowmaking and grooming (both gifts of the Friends of Abenaki) have contributed to the resurgence of use at Abenaki.

- Commissioned existing features plan from Norway Plains
- Commissioned wetland survey and permitting process through Ilex Wetlands
- Commissioned soil testing through Sovereign Consulting
- Commissioned architectural services through Vaune Dugan.
- Held Public Input Session May 2013. Engaged stakeholders from all user groups, including adults and children, as well as interested members of the general public.
- Based on Public Input, Building Committee meets from May through August, developing various conceptual designs.
- From May—July, met with various user groups about possible use and conceptual of the future Lodge:
 - Senior Center and Meals
 - Library staff and Building Committee
 - Abenaki Staff (snowmakers, lodge staff, lift staff, administrative staff)
- Met with Selectmen and Town Manager one on one to solicit feedback on conceptual design and weighing priorities with other Town Projects.
- Met with Friends of Abenaki to get support for final conceptual design and commitment of \$250K of fundraising for project.
- In early August, solicited cost estimates from Bauen Corporation (Meredith Community Center, Tuftonboro Fire Station) and CCI (Pop Whalen Fire Protection, Common Man developers).
- Constructed Parks Maintenance Building
- Received quotes ranging from \$750K to \$1.3M. Building committee reduced scope and size of building to bare minimum to bring costs down.

2014

- Complete engineering and code review. Final estimates for CIP process.
- \$630K current projected cost (as of July 2014)

2015

- Construction of new Lodge
- Demolition of old Lodge and remaining Maintenance Sheds

Phases

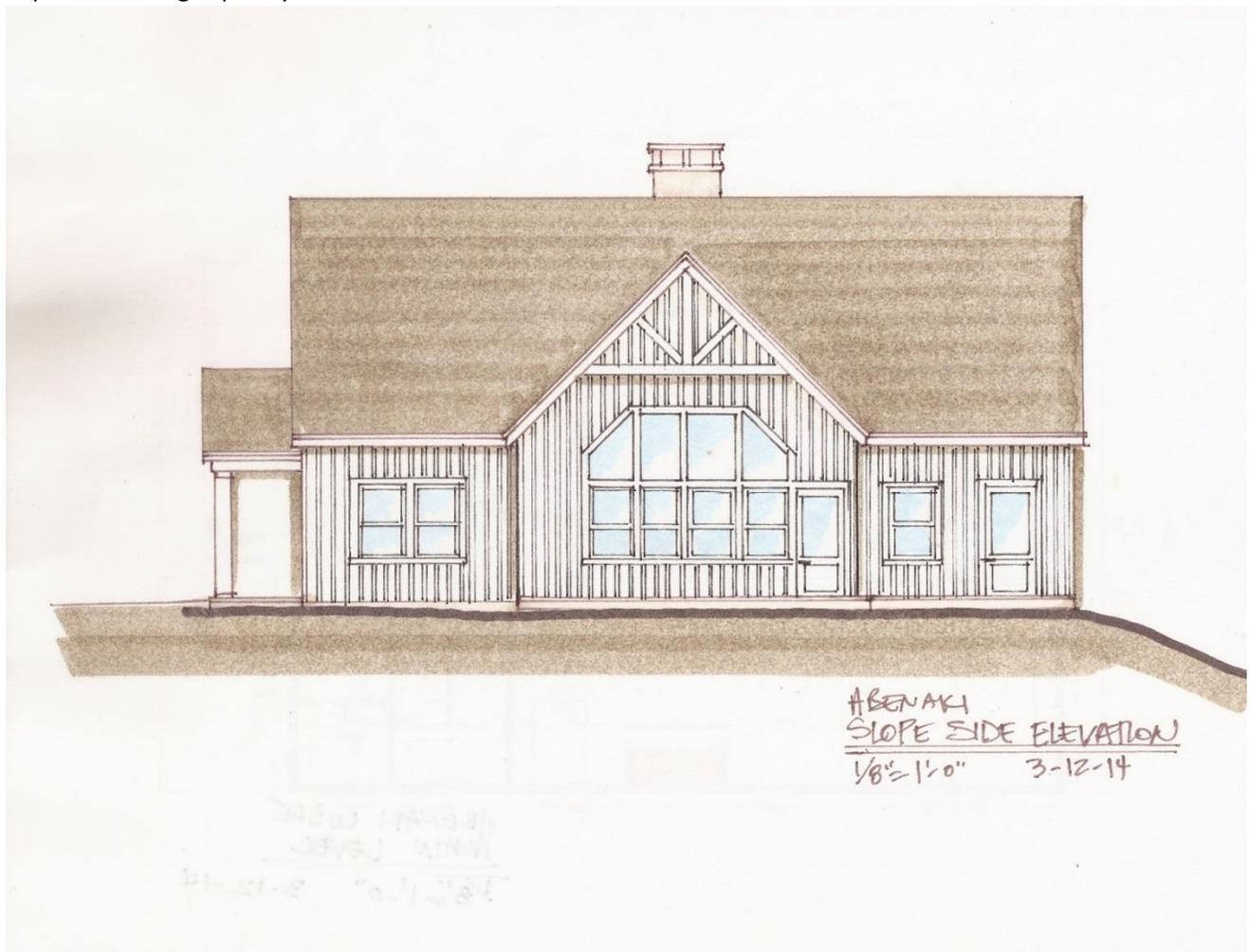
Phase 1 (2013): Construct Parks Maintenance Building and demolish existing Maintenance sheds

Phase 2 (2015): Construct Abenaki 4-Season Lodge on site of old Maintenance sheds

Conceptual Design

Through our Public Input session and meeting one on one with various user groups, it became clear that there was a desire and need for a 4-season recreational facility at Abenaki. It was felt by most participants that building a facility that would be used *only* as a ski lodge for three months of the year would not be the best utilization of financial resources and that a focus on a four season lodge would be the most efficient and fiscally responsible approach. These community needs guided our initial design process and the Building Committee came up with an initial design that includes the following features.

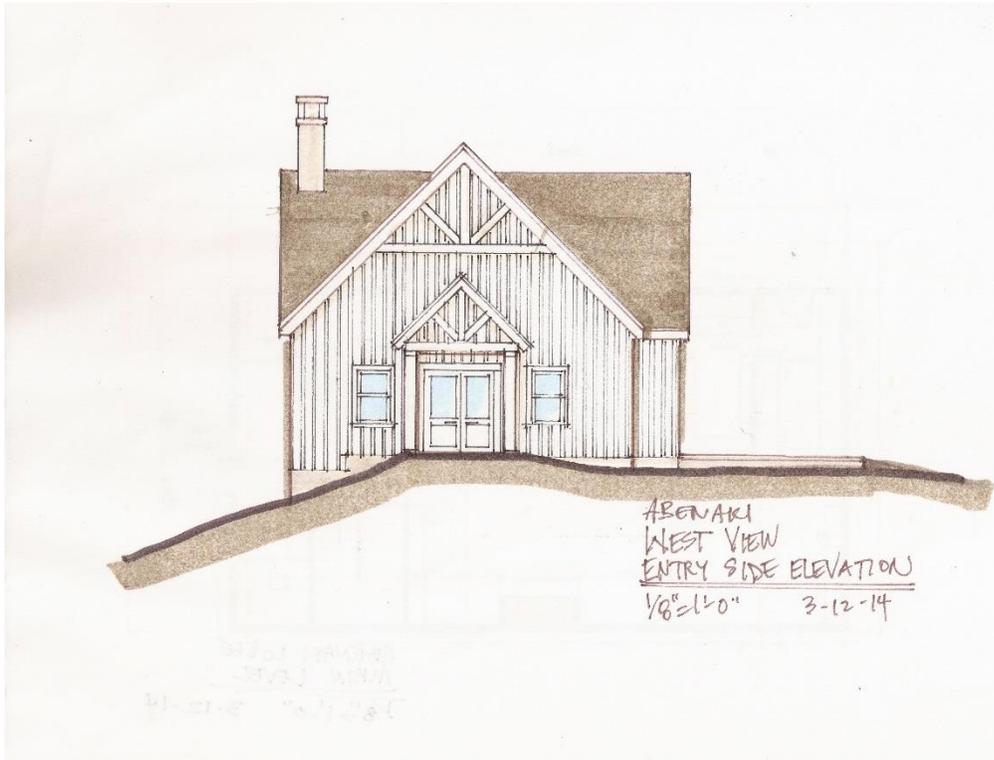
- Lodge Great Room that seats 80. Existing lodge has seating for 12.
- Total Square footage of initial design is 3,432 sq. ft. (1,716 on main floor, 1,716 basement)
- Existing lodge is 880 sq. ft. and existing Nordic Hut is 200 sq. ft. = 1080 sq. ft.
- Commercial ADA restrooms in the basement. Restrooms can be utilized by XC skiers, walkers and mountain bikers when the rest of the lodge is not open to the public.
- Full finished basement with room for Ski Patrol, Ski Rentals, Storage and Utility room
- Full ADA compliance, complete with elevator for access to basement (multiple construction professionals advised that elevator was lower cost than incorporating all building functions on one floor with bigger footprint)
- Commercial-rated kitchenette. The kitchenette will be utilized to provide food for ski area patrons, as well as for private rental groups.
- Sprinkler System not required (design-dependent).
- Tap into existing septic system.



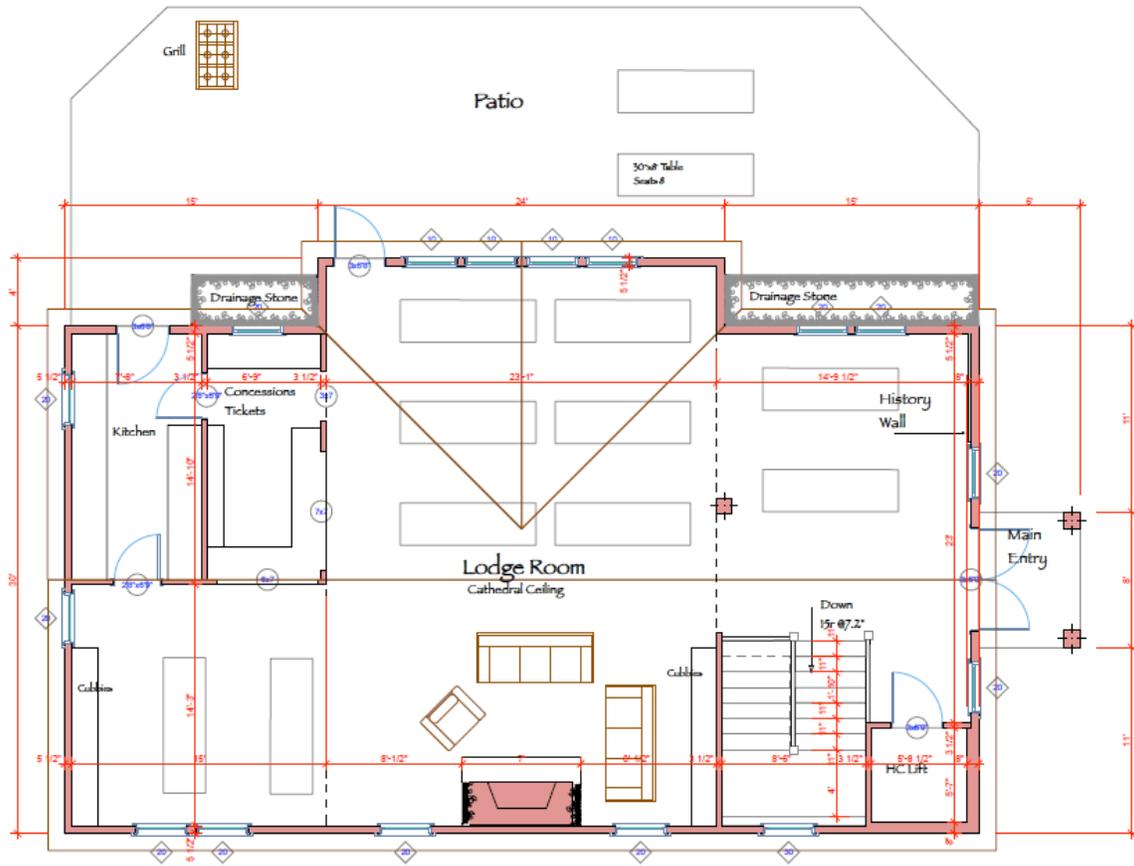
Proposed Lodge--view from the hill. 3,432 sq. feet



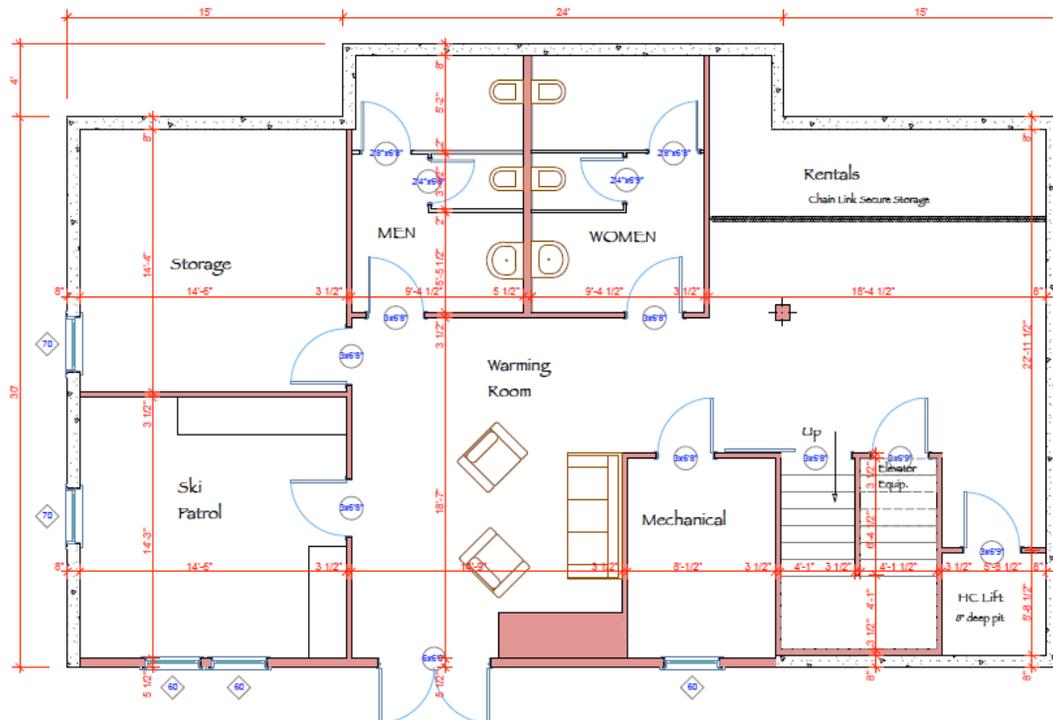
Proposed Lodge, view from the pond. 3,432, sq ft.



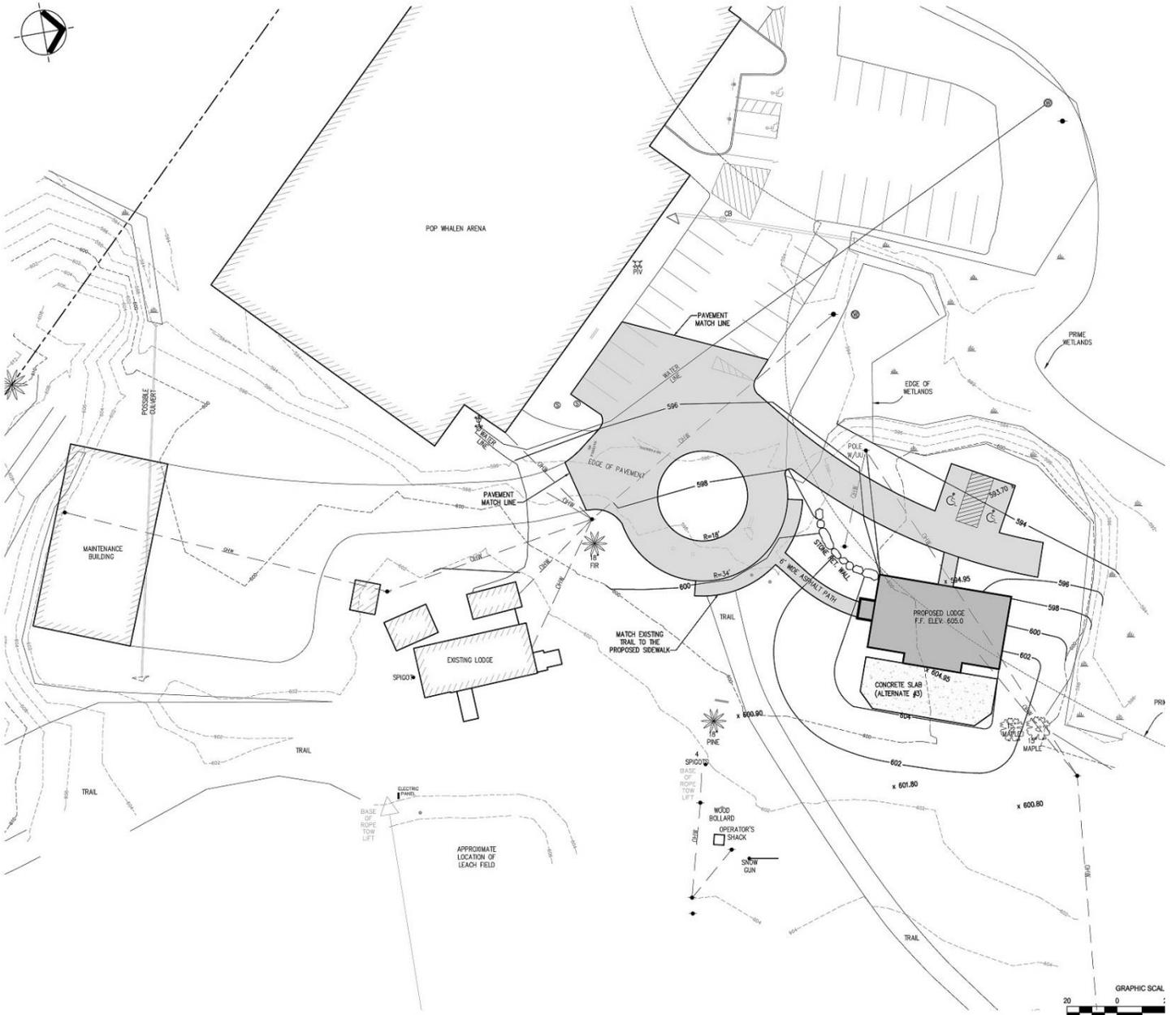
Proposed lodge, view from parking lot.



Main Floor



Basement



PROPOSED GRADING & DRAINAGE PLAN

Vision for the Future

The Abenaki 4-Season Lodge will be a recreational and social hub for the greater Wolfeboro community, neighboring towns and visitors. It will be a place that residents, friends and visitors can gather, socialize and recreate during all months of the year. Winter activities taking place at the Lodge will include recreational skiing and snowboarding, ski and snowboard lessons and ski teams, XC skiing, XC ski teams and meets, special events such as Winter Carnival, Abenaki Winter Triathlon and downhill races and freestyle competitions on the national competition circuit. The lodge will serve the growing needs of Abenaki Ski Area, which has seen at least 15% growth for each of the past 8 years (and up to 40% growth in some years).

The lodge will serve as a home base and training center for the Abenaki Ski Racing team (20+ members) and the Abenaki Freestyle Team (40 members), as well as the Brewster Ski Team and Snowboard team. With increased indoor space, the ski area has the potential to host the local school ski program, reducing travel times for the schools and increasing ski area revenues. The lodge will serve as a comfortable, warm place for people of all ages to gather in the cold and lonely winter months to engage in each other's company and brighten the spirit.

Spring, summer and fall activities that will take place are hiking, biking, running, nature exploration on our prime wetland and pond on property, recreational programs offered through Wolfeboro Parks and Recreation and more. It will serve as a meeting place for community groups and it can be utilized as a revenue generating rental facility for receptions and parties. The lodge will be able to host existing year round recreational programs and camps, such as Quilters Club, Karate, fitness classes, Day Camp programs, Wilderness Camp and much more. The facility can house many of the functions currently taking place at the Community Center at 22 Lehner St.

With the construction of the Abenaki Lodge complete, the future for America's oldest small ski area will be bright, and the Wolfeboro community will be an even more attractive place to start a business, retire or raise a family.



Abenaki is the oldest small ski area in America. Picture taken 1940's.



A place for all ages, Abenaki is a town treasure.

Cost Estimates for Abenaki Ski Lodge (as of July 2014)

Company	Construction Estimate	Elevator	Kitchen Equip	5% Contingency	Total	Square Feet	Per Sq. Ft
Conneston Construction Inc	\$558,700.00	\$32,381	\$10,000	\$30,054	\$631,135	3,432	\$184