

Holderness Master Plan
Update 2015

Historical and Cultural Resources Chapter

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Adopted 8.20.15

Holderness Historical and Cultural Resources

Introduction to Historical and Cultural Resources Chapter

This chapter recognizes, within the Holderness Master Plan, that Holderness would not be our unique town without its many historical resources and cultural traditions. The chapter was presented at the Town Meeting; online on the Town's website; at an open house and a public meeting with the Planning Board; and approved by the Planning Board after public hearings. A list of committee members can be found in Appendix A.

The chapter's purpose is to highlight existing resources, identify some landmark locations, list ongoing traditions, and recommend strategies for maintaining the town's rural character as we navigate demographic and climatic transitions in the future. The citizens of Holderness are rightfully proud of the many historical areas of our town and recognize that these not only make our town unique, but they also provide an economic benefit through significant tourist visits.

Holderness was named after Robert Darcy, the 4th Earl of Holderness and a Secretary of State in Great Britain, in 1751 when our Town was originally granted by King George II. Because of troubles with the French, settlers did not come until after the Town was re-granted as New Holderness by King George III in 1761. "New" was dropped in 1816. Our Town is the only town or city called Holderness in the United States. The long history of Holderness is reflected in the built landscape around town and in the many farms and barns visible from the public roads. Many buildings, such as the Town Hall, the Holderness Inn, the Holderness School, and the Holderness Free Library, also reflect the history of Holderness. These historic structures provide a connection with the past and a foundation for future generations.

It is our challenge to encourage future growth and development patterns which complement and enhance the existing historical and rural character of Holderness.

1. Goals

Goals are identified in a Master Plan to broadcast the desires of the Town regarding the identification, interpretation, and stewardship of historical and cultural resources. Goals represent, generally, those for the entire town. They are broad in nature and are met by implementing the Plan's recommendations.

These include:

- Raise awareness regarding the value of historical and cultural resources.
- Recognize that our historical resources add to the rural character of Holderness.
- Recognize that visitors to the town appreciate the quaint ambiance which is created by our historical structures and landscapes.
- Encourage and support a variety of cultural activities for residents and visitors.
- Continue to identify landmark properties that are of particular historical/cultural importance to Holderness.
- Consider new planning tools such as demolition review and incentives for preserving or reusing historical structures.

2. The General History of Holderness

Historical evidence of the Abenaki presence in Holderness was found when the public boat ramp was created in the town center in 2001. According to radiocarbon dating of artifacts, the Abenaki and their ancestors could be found in the Davison Brook area as far back as 4,100 years ago. Abenaki representatives participated in the town's 250th anniversary in 2011. Archaeologists investigated a nearby site on the Squam River in June and July, 2015.

During the past 250 years, Holderness has developed a rich cultural heritage. Situated between the Pemigewasset River to the west, Squam Lake to the east, and mountains to the north, early settlers took advantage of their unique geographical location for food and security. The first colonial inhabitants of Holderness came primarily from Durham and Portsmouth in the 1760s. Descendants of the grantees---Shepards, Ellisons, Coxes, and Smiths---still live among us 250 years later.

Agriculture reigned supreme during our early history. The more industrial, southwestern part of town split off in 1868 to become the Town of Ashland, because the needs of the people living there were so vastly different from the farmers to the north and east. Agricultural endeavors have continued to provide Holderness with stability. Some areas have been in continuous production for more than a century and there are still families living in the same location for five generations or more. Today, there are many thriving small businesses in Holderness which contribute to the economy. The Town is also supported by those who come to enjoy our lakes (as residents or visitors) and those working in nearby communities.

The early history of the Town of Holderness can be found in George Hodges's 1907 account, *Holderness: An Account of the Beginnings of a New Hampshire Town*. Margaret A. Howe and Susan Bacon Keith compiled an *Abbreviated History of Holderness* in 1961 for the town bicentennial. The portion of the town closest to Squam Lake has received far more attention and has been covered by Catherine Campbell (1980); Bruce Heald (2002); Rachel Carley (2004); Derek Brereton (2010); and Elizabeth Durfee Hengen (2012). However, an update of the history of Holderness is needed to consolidate all the different sources. The town is also fortunate that the Holderness Historical Society (HHS) purchased and moved the 1860 North Holderness Free Will Baptist Church to a site near the Holderness Post Office for its home. The HHS maintains many historical artifacts and documents in its facility which is open to the public.

3. Historical Areas of Holderness

Our population lives in four distinct geographical areas of Holderness: lake residents living near the center of town with vistas across the Squam Lakes and White Oak Pond; those living in the middle of the town along Perch Pond Road and Owl Brook; people on the western slopes of Mt. Prospect with vistas northwest towards Plymouth, Rumney, Campton and Franconia; and those who live in the Coxboro and East Holderness areas with historic farmlands. (These four areas are illustrated in Appendix C). Although geographical features and historical use have created these distinct areas, Holderness maintains a strong sense of community, primarily through cultural and civic engagement which ties us all together.

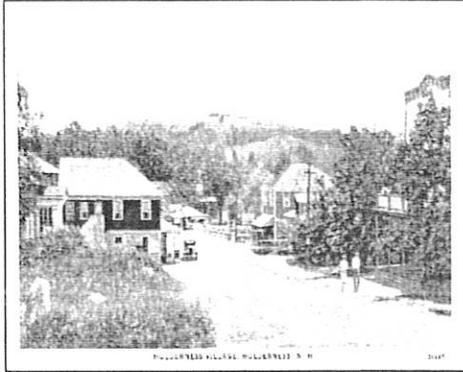


Figure 1: Old postcard of Main Street

The center of commercial activity in Holderness has long been on the Routes 3 and 25 (US and NH respectively) corridor. Improvements to this area over the past thirty-five years include the post office; construction of the public safety building; expansion of the Holderness Free Library and the creation of the veterans' Honor Roll located on the adjacent lawn; the relocation of the building now occupied by the Holderness Historical Society; the construction of the adjacent gazebo and lawn area for summertime concerts; the 'ChannelWalk' path; improvements at the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center; and the siting of the New Hampshire Fish and Game parking lot and boat ramps proximate to the

intersection of NH Route 113 and US Route 3. The town center is tied together by the sidewalk that now runs from the intersection of NH Route 175 and US Route 3 to Perkins Lane. The town center does not have a local historic district, although several structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places including the library, the Historical Society, and the Holderness Inn at the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center. NH Routes 25, 113, and 175 and US Route 3 are hereafter referred to as Routes 25, 113, 175, and 3.

The Holderness Central School and Perch Pond Road link the central section of the town. This area enjoys Owl Brook, the Town Forest, and the Pilote Forest on the southern slope of Mt. Prospect. Steep slopes, forests and conservation lands are prominent. The Holderness School, Pemigewasset River, and Mt. Prospect Road tie the western side of Holderness together. There are two National Register listings in this area of town: the Chapel of the Holy Cross at Holderness School and the Trinity Chapel at Churchyard Cemetery. Historical sites along Mt. Prospect Road have not been evaluated for State or National Register listing. The Coxboro and East Holderness areas are linked by historical farms, White Oak Pond, and early lakeside settlements. The enclave of summer cottages developed more than a century ago around the site of the former Asquam House, located atop Shepard Hill, was recently listed as an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places.

4. Highlights of US Routes 3 and NH 175 in Holderness

If we were to take a drive on the main roads that bisect Holderness, what structures might provide a feeling for the historical parts of Holderness? Coming from the east on US Route 3, we would pass by the former Minary Center and Camp Deerwood, both of which have been standing for almost a century. We can detour off Route 3 onto historic College Road (built by Governor John Wentworth in 1771 to connect his summer home in Wolfeboro to Dartmouth College) and pass through Shepard Hill, an enclave of cottages dating from the late 19th century. From 1881 to 1948, the Asquam House stood at the summit. Like the Livermore Towers below Mt. Livermore, this grand hotel saw its popularity wane as tourists preferred to stay in motels, rental cottages, and private homes. Approaching the center of town, we would find the renowned Manor on Golden Pond built in 1904; the Squam Boat Livery that was pictured in the film, *On Golden Pond*, and the brick building of the Holderness Free Library. A turn on Route 113 would take us by historic summer camps and 19th century farms including Rogers, Burleigh, Willoughby, and True Farms.

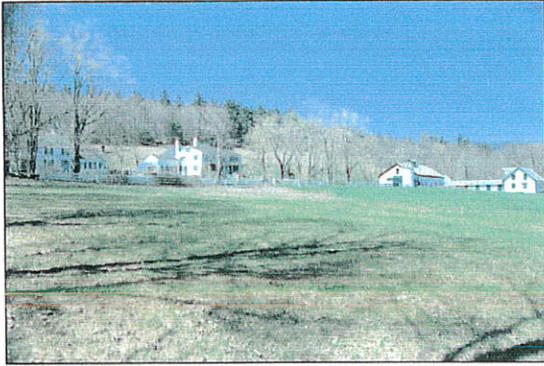


Figure 2: True Farm

1879. A short drive along Route 175 takes us to Livermore Falls State Park and the historic “pumpkin seed bridge,” built in 1886. To see the other historic buildings in town, one would have to either take a boat ride on the Squam Lakes or drive off the beaten path.

This brief tour along the main roads of Holderness provides numerous examples of historical areas which all contribute to the unique character of our Town. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive inventory of historical resources in the town. This task will be a recommendation of this chapter. There are many challenges to preserving our cultural heritage as structures are torn down, replaced and modernized. Progress and change are inevitable; however, we wish to identify certain areas of Holderness to which many citizens feel a special attachment. These are just some highlights of places on Routes 3, 113 and 175; more assets of the Town will be discussed later in the chapter.

5. Preservation Efforts since the Previous Master Plan in 1984

The 1984 Master Plan contained a chapter on Historical Resources which focused primarily on the effort to identify and nominate structures that might be eligible for National Register listing. Seventeen structures were listed as being historically significant to Holderness and inventory forms were compiled for each of these. All of these historic structures are still standing although several have been modified and renovated. Five town properties were listed on the National Register in the decade following the 1984 Master Plan. Neither the 1994 nor the 2007 Master Plan included a chapter on historical resources in Holderness.

In 2012, the Squam National Register Initiative was successful in completing a Multiple Property Documentation Form for the Squam viewshed which was endorsed by the National Park Service. This documentation provides some preservation protection for the Lakes (Big Squam, Little Squam, and White Oak Pond) and makes listing new properties more expedient. Currently, there are thirteen sites in Holderness listed on the National Register (Appendix B) and none on the State Register of Historic Places.

6. List of Landmark Areas of Town

A “Landmark Area” is an historic or scenic asset which our community values, and which is essential to our quality of life, both now and through the 21st century. The committee spent considerable time driving roads and speaking with residents throughout Town to gain a sense of

which historical areas of Holderness are the most important and which should be preserved in the future, if possible. Please refer to Appendix C for a list of these areas.

7. Cultural Resources

Cultural resources include the traditions, associations, volunteer groups, and other cultural institutions based in Holderness. These provide unique activities for our citizens to enjoy and also provide a sense of community and cohesion. A brief listing of the resource highlights follows.

Education

Holderness is known for its many educational institutions. Public education is provided by the Holderness Central School with grades kindergarten through eighth. New Hampshire's Plymouth State University campus is partly located in Holderness. Holderness School, founded in 1879, is a top-tier boarding school for students in grades nine through twelve. It also operates a Montessori pre-school. Educational workshops are held at Rockywold-Deephaven Camps in June and September on a variety of topics.

The Owl Brook Education facility, owned by the New Hampshire Dept. of Fish and Game, offers workshops on hunting and fishing. Located on the 500 acre forested facility are a rifle range and an archery range, in addition to interpretive trails. Owl Brook opened in 2004 and is the first of its kind in the state.

The Squam Lakes Natural Science Center was incorporated in 1966 to educate school children and adults in the fundamentals of natural science through exhibits and displays featuring live animals native to New Hampshire. During 2013 there were over 50,000 guests who visited the 200-acre facility. In addition to the nature trail with live animals, the Science Center offers lake tours and operates Kirkwood Gardens with more than 100 species of plants on display. Its Blue Heron Montessori pre-school was started in 2010.

Holderness Historical Society



Figure 3: Holderness Historical Society

In addition to maintaining artifacts and documents related to the town, the Holderness Historical Society offers summer lectures and opens its museum Saturday mornings in the summer. The Society publishes two newsletters with articles on local history and citizens. Members help with genealogical research on request. The Society also maintains the flower boxes on the bridge in the town center.

Holderness Free Library

Programs are offered by the Holderness Library throughout the year. The Friends of the Library host a book sale and family-centered event each Memorial Day along with a “Santa Sale” in December which allows young children to do their holiday shopping by purchasing donated items. The Library also offers, in conjunction with the Science Center, a “story walk” each summer.

Religious Entities

Chocorua Island, also known as Church Island, was first settled as a boys’ camp in 1881 by Ernest Balch. This camp is considered to be one of the first organized camps in the country. Outdoor chapel services were part of the camp tradition for the nine years it operated. Chocorua Chapel Association, founded in 1903, has continued the tradition of providing summer outdoor services on “Church Island” for over 110 years.

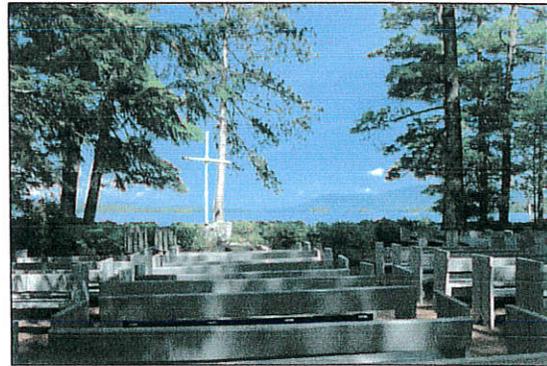


Figure 4: Church Island

Trinity Church, commonly known as Trinity Chapel, no longer has scheduled services. However, the Chapel is available seasonally for marriage and funeral services. The Holderness School holds two services at the Church each year: one is at the beginning of the school year for incoming freshmen and the other is in May for graduating seniors who all sign the guest book at the Church.

The Fifth Free Will Baptist Church, built in 1896 on what is now Route 3, known since 1969 as The Holderness Community Church, continues to hold Sunday services. There is a Jehovah’s Witnesses meeting house on East Holderness Road.

St. Peter’s-in-the-Mount Episcopal Church, built in 1888, became a private home in 1978 due to a dwindling congregation. The Roman Catholic Chapel of the Sacred Heart, on Rte. 113, was built in the late nineteenth century to accommodate worshippers in the area, including many summer campers, who found water transportation easier than traveling by land. In 2004, it became The Little Church Theater and now offers classes, art shows, and theatrical productions throughout the summer.

Squam Lakes Preservation Organizations

Several organizations focus on the preservation of the Squam watershed, including the Squam Lakes Conservation Society, an accredited land trust, that have succeeded in preserving more than 25% of the Squam watershed through conservation easements and fee-owned properties.

The Squam Lakes Association (SLA), founded in 1903, maintains fifty miles of trails throughout the Squam area, including the summits of East and West Rattlesnake mountains and along the Squam Range. In addition, it manages public camping facilities on Moon and Bowman Islands

and at the Chamberlain Reynolds Forest as well as a public boat launch for boats which are non-motorized or equipped with outboard motors 25 horsepower or less. The Junior Squam Lakes Association (JSLA) offers sailing lessons and other camp experiences for youngsters.

The White Oak Pond Watershed Association (WOPWA) was established in 1973 by Mary Perry to protect the quality of the waters and tributaries of the 290-acre White Oak Pond and to promote conservation of the natural, scenic and historic resources of its 3,000-acre watershed. The organization monitors the Pond's water quality and assists in establishing land conservation easements, among other activities.

Friends of the Pemi River

In 2013, the Friends of the Pemigewasset (Pemi) River organization was started by concerned citizens with assistance from the local Rotary Club. This group has been successful in cleaning up and improving access to the Livermore Falls area. This historic area is the site of the first fish hatchery in New Hampshire and features a rare example of a “pumpkin seed” bridge just across the town line in Campton. In 2014, Livermore Falls became a State Park encompassing land in Holderness, Campton, and Plymouth.

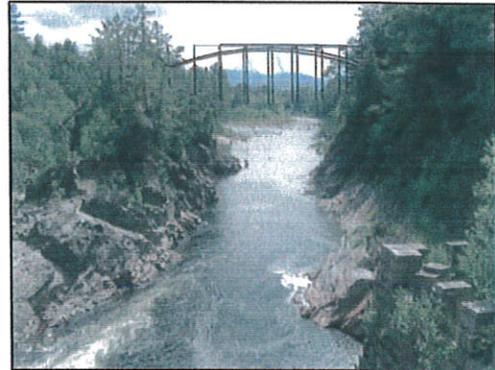


Figure 5: View of Pumpkin Seed Bridge across the Pemigewasset River

The Camps

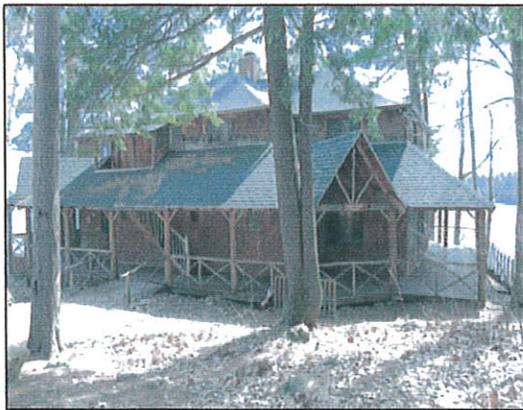
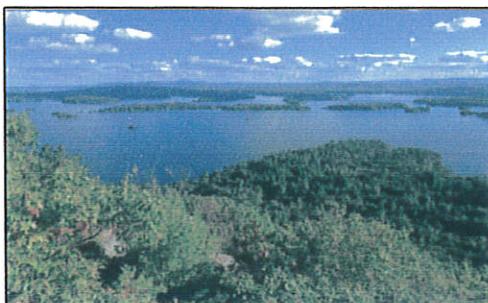


Figure 6: Greenwood Lodge, Rockywold-Deephaven Camps

Holderness has a rich history of camping. In continuous operation since 1897, Rockywold-Deephaven Camps (RDC) provides family camping opportunities and is listed on the National Register. Camp Deerwood took over the property first developed by Camp Asquam in 1886 and also provides space for the Singing Eagle camp for girls. Historically, other youth camps included Camp Algonquin, Squamasee, Camp Wachusett, Camp Aloha, Camp Winnetaska (formerly Camp Ilee), Groton School Camp, and the Summer School of Music for Girls. Original camp buildings still exist.



Historic Trails and Roads

Hiking trails exist throughout the Squam Range as well as in the Owl Brook area of Holderness at the Pilote Forest and the Town Forest. The summit of Mt. Prospect is reached through a system of carriage roads

Figure 7: View from West Rattlesnake

on conservation and private lands. The hike up to the summit of West Rattlesnake via the Bridle Path is known as “the best view for the shortest hike” in the whole state. The Holderness Conservation Commission is working on a long term goal of establishing a town-wide system of trails from the Pemi River to Squam Lake. A summary of recreational opportunities is included in the Recreation chapter of the Master Plan.

Holderness has several roads which date from colonial times and was situated at the crossroads of two important ones. College Road (see Highlights section) and Province Road, traveling north from Durham to Haverhill and mandated by the provisional government in 1763, intersected in New Holderness at Samuel Shepard’s Tavern on Owl Brook Road (now Ashland). College and Province Roads joined together from Shepard’s Tavern over Hicks Hill Road and along what is now Route 175 to Squire Samuel Livermore’s home, now the Holderness School Campus. The Old Mountain Road went from Route 113 to Perch Pond Road just west of Burleigh Farm. This is now a hiking trail accessing the Squam Range. Remnants of the Old Highway from Holderness to Sandwich still exist.

Liberty Elms

The Holderness Conservation Commission has worked with the Liberty Tree Society in Keene, New Hampshire to plant three Liberty Elm trees on Town properties. A large elm with a memorial plaque was planted on the front lawn of the Holderness Central School. Two smaller elms have been planted at the top of the amphitheater at the gazebo behind the post office. All elms are doing well at the present time. Liberty Elms are trees resistant to Dutch Elm disease, a disease responsible for the death of most elm trees in the US.

Other Clubs and Associations

The Pemi Fish and Game Club, Perch Pond Road, was started in 1941 and provides members with comradery and shooting ranges for target practice. Their goals include conservation of habitat, good sportsmanship, gun safety and management of wildlife resources.

The Masonic Lodge is on Route 3 near the Meredith line. The Masons recognize community leaders and raise funds for widows and orphans as well as for other local causes. The Eastern Star hosts ham and bean suppers several times a year to support their efforts.

Mt. Livermore Grange was founded in 1900 and currently meets at the Firehouse. The group spearheaded the drive for a new Veterans’ Honor Roll and funded the research necessary to list all veterans back to the American Revolution. It continues to raise funds in order to assist residents in need.

The Elks Lodge is on Route 175. The group raises funds for veterans, high school scholarships, and holiday food baskets and sponsors a spring fishing derby for local children.

Holderness Traditions

Other traditions in Holderness include a summer fireworks display on Little Squam (started at the 250th celebration); summer concerts at the gazebo behind the post office; Memorial Day observance; the Bean Pot tournament: a summer softball game between Holderness and Rockywold-Deephaven Camps; Lightning sailboat races; New Hampshire Day at the Science Center; and the annual spring plant sale at Kirkwood Gardens. In the off-season, there is ice fishing and skating on the lakes; ice harvesting by Rockywold-Deephaven Camps; the SLA Winterfest and chili contest; and the annual [Town and School meeting in March](#).

Holderness and Squam Lake were featured in the 1981 movie, *On Golden Pond*, directed by Mark Rydell. The influence of the movie can be seen where the Texaco sign still hangs at the Squam Boat Livery marina located adjacent to the restaurant, Walter's Basin in the town center. The Inn on Golden Pond operates across from Town Hall.

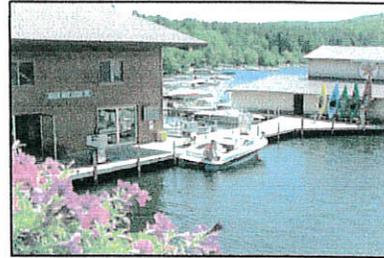


Figure 8: Squam Boat Livery

8. Recommendations

Recommendations lead to the actions to be taken to implement the vision or goals of the Plan. Once adopted, they should specify who will be responsible for the action, what resources (financial, physical, and human) they will need to complete the task, and the probable timeframe for completion. Partnerships are often identified in the action plan.

- Secure resources to complete an update of Holderness' history.
- Create a comprehensive inventory (supported by photographs) of town archaeological, historical and cultural resources. Consider the potential for additional State and National Register listings. This might include a database which contains
 - Cellar holes, stone walls, and other historical sites
 - Old parks and roads
 - Native American sites
 - One room school houses
 - Pre-20th century farms and farm buildings
 - Churches
 - Cemeteries
- Adopt planning tools and incentives (economic, regulatory) to encourage owners to renovate and repurpose rather than demolish historical structures.
 - Encourage usage of barn easements.
 - Embark upon an education campaign to make property owners aware of such tools and incentives.
 - Consider demolition permit review and/or referral.
- Increase awareness of historical resources in the town by creating tours of local sites along Route 3 (audio, walking, mobile applications, web-based).

- In concert with the Recreation Department and Conservation Commission, plan and implement a town-wide trail system utilizing certain historical areas as a focus.
- Support the Holderness Historical Society and its historic facility.
- Encourage the Planning Board to consider members who have an interest in historical Holderness.
- Discourage development projects which may have an adverse effect on historic sites and aesthetics.

Photo Credits: Peter Francesco, Liz Durfee Hengen, Squam Boat Livery, and Betsy Whitmore

Appendix A

Historic Resources Chapter Committee Members

- Alicia Abbott
- Barbara Fahey
- Peter Francesco
- Woodie Laverack
- Missy Mason, Vice Chair
- Larry Spencer
- Bob Tuveson
- Kathy Weymouth
- Betsy Whitmore, Chair

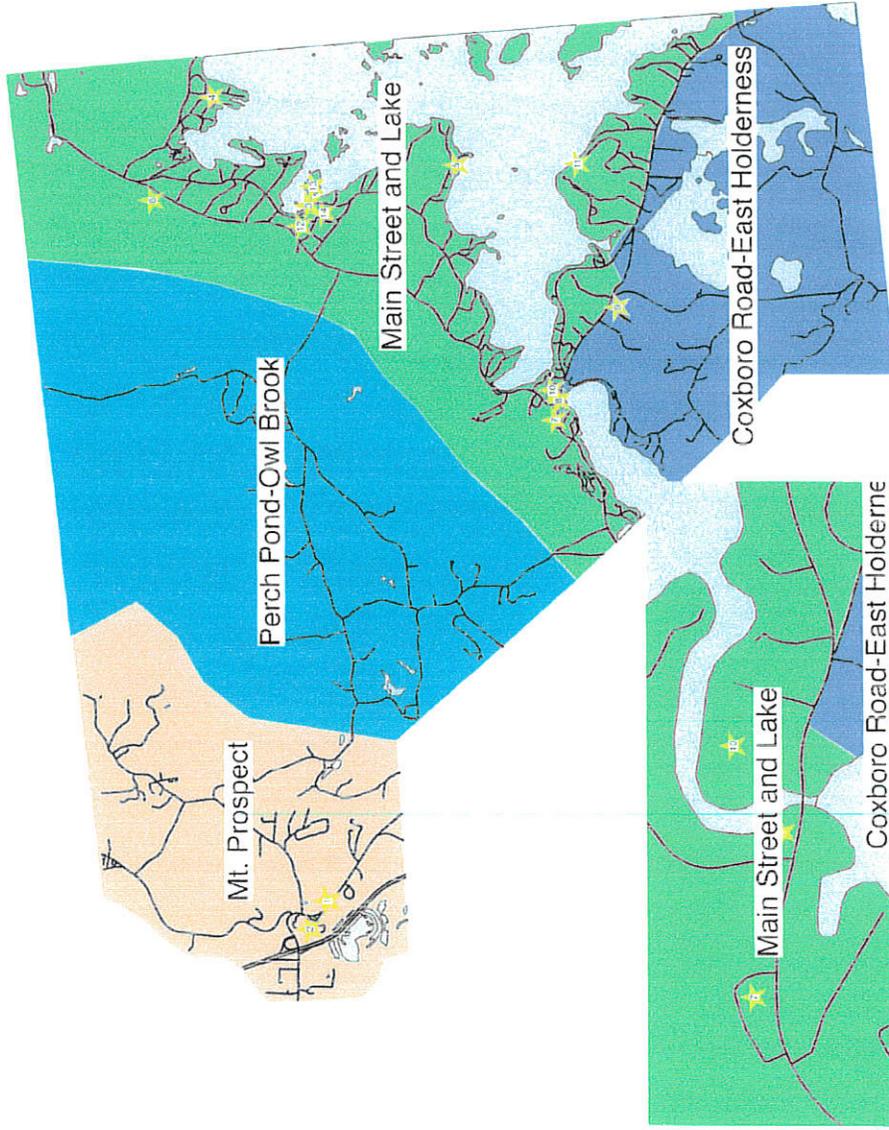
Staff: Colleen Hannon, Land Use Administrative Assistant

Appendix B

Buildings in Holderness Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

1. Burleigh Brae and Webster Boathouse (1911)
2. Camp Carnes (1894)
3. Camp Ossipee (ca. 1900)
4. Chapel of the Holy Cross, campus of Holderness School (1884)
5. Holderness Free Library (1911)
6. Holderness Inn, owned by the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center (1896)
7. North Holderness Free Will Baptist Church; now, Holderness Historical Society (1860)
8. Rockywold-Deephaven Camps (1897)
9. Shepard Hill Historic District (1870-1921)
10. Trinity Church (1797)
11. True Farm (ca. 1820-1920)
12. Watch Rock Camp (1926-1939)
13. Webster Estate (1899 and 1903)

id	NatRegist	Date
1	Trinity Church	1797
2	Chapel of the Holy Cross	1884
3	Webster Boatouse	1911
4	Rockywood-Deephaven Camps	1897
5	Camp Ossipee	1900
6	True Farm	1820
7	Holderness Inn	1896
8	Holderness Free Library	1911
9	Shepard Hill Historic District	1870
10	North Holderness Free Will Baptist Church	1860
11	Watch Rock Camp	1926
12	Burleigh Brae	1911
13	Camp Carnes	1894
14	Webster Estate	1899



Town of Holderness--Locations on the National Register

Appendix C**Landmark Locations in Holderness****Mt. Prospect area (western):**

- Livermore Falls
- Holderness School
- Ellison Mill
- Trinity Church and cemetery
- Captain Russell Cox House
- Marrer house

Perch Pond and Owl Brook area (central):

- Old Mountain Road
- Town Farm Road
- Pilote and Town Forests
- Mt. Prospect

Main Street and Lake area (town center):

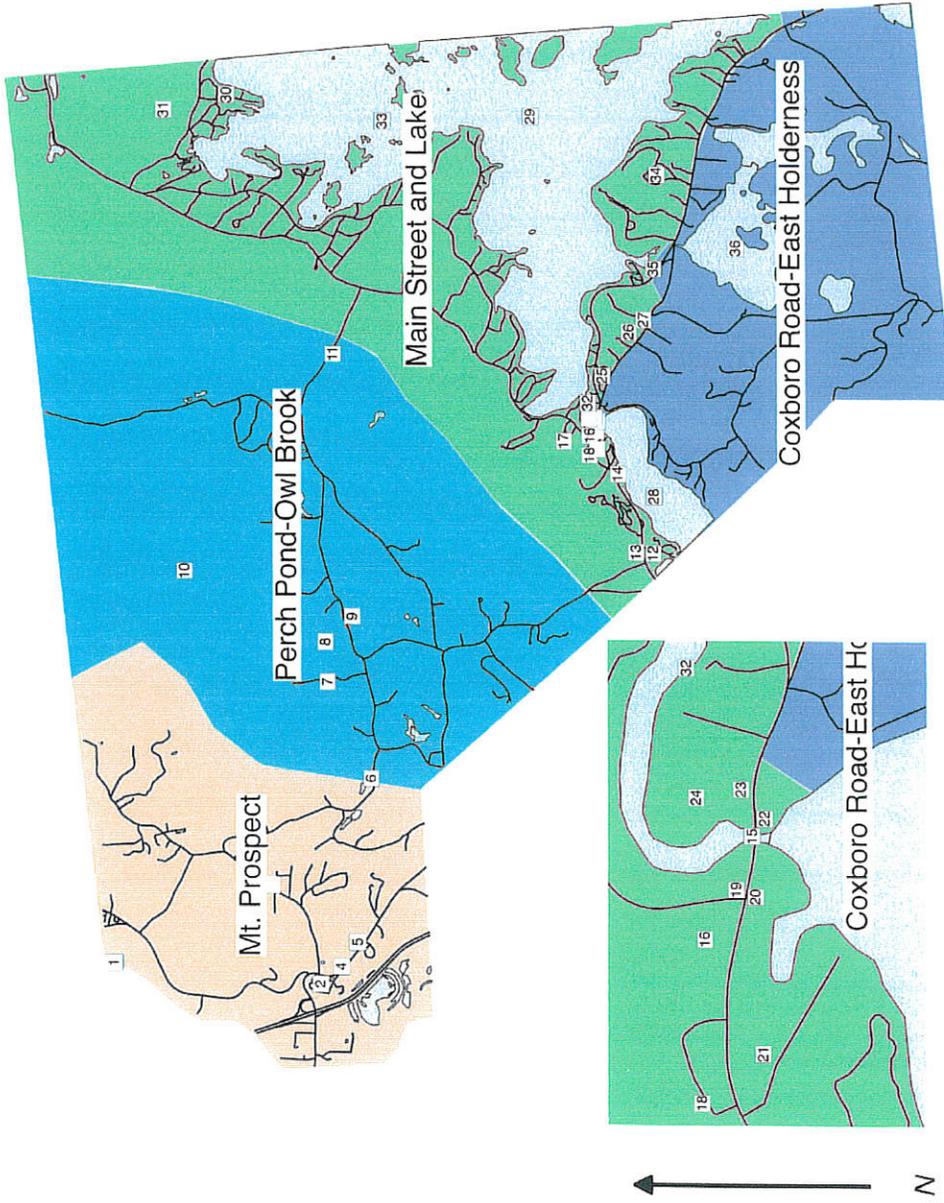
- Town Hall (Grange Hall ca. 1820)
- Inn on Golden Pond (Sargent house)
- Holderness Community Church
- Squam Bridge
- Squam Bridge Cemetery
- Squam Lakes Natural Science Center
- Central House/Holderness Inn
- Holderness Free Library
- Smith Piper store
- Squam Lake MarketPlace
- Squam Boat Livery
- Curry Place
- Holderness Historical Society
- Manor on Golden Pond
- St. Peter's-in-the-Mount
- Shepard Hill
- Squam Lakes (Little and Big)
- Rockywold-Deephaven Camps
- West Rattlesnake
- Eaton Boat House on the channel
- Church Island

- Camp Deerwood

Coxboro/East Holderness area (eastern):

- SLA/SLCS building
- White Oak Pond

id	Name
1	Livermore Falls
2	Holderness School
3	Ellison Mill
4	Trinity Church and Cemetery
5	Captain Russell Cox House
6	Marrer House
7	Town Farm Road
8	Pilote Forest
9	Town Forest
10	Mt. Prospect
11	Old Mountain Road
12	Town Hall
13	Inn on Golden Pond (Sargent house)
14	Holderness Community Church
15	Squam Bridge
16	Squam Bridge Cemetery
17	Squam Lakes Natural Science Center
18	Central House/Holderness Inn
19	Holderness Free Library
20	Squam Lake MarketPlace
21	Smith Piper Store
22	Squam Boat Livery
23	Curry Place
24	Holderness Historical Society
25	Manor on Golden Pond
26	St. Peter's-in-the-Mount
27	Shepard Hill
28	Little Squam Lake
29	Big Squam Lake
30	Rockywood-Deephaven Camps
31	West Rattlesnake
32	Eaton Boat House
33	Church Island
34	Camp Deerwood
35	SLA/SLCS Building
36	White Oak Pond



Town of Holderness--Appendix C Landmarks