

Howland tannery site upgrade set for summer



Nick Sambides Jr. | BDN

Tom Pelkey of Eddington, an equipment operator with J.E. Butler LLC of Holden, spent most of the day watching for and helping gather recyclable debris at the former Howland tannery building in July 2012. *Buy Photo*



By Nick Sambides Jr., BDN Staff

[Follow on Twitter](#) [Find on Facebook](#)

Posted Feb. 15, 2013, at 2:45 p.m.

HOWLAND, Maine — A landscape architect from Bar Harbor is developing designs for about \$150,000 worth of improvements to the former Howland tannery site, Town Manager Tracey Hutton says.

Hutton will be contacting Copeland Associates of Bar Harbor and project engineer CES Inc. to develop a design and construction timeline by early next week. Construction should occur this summer, Hutton said.

The plan, Hutton said, is to add lights, benches, trails, sidewalks and other amenities to the site.

“This step is really important for the community because it will allow people to get onto the site better. It will help us improve access to the site,” Hutton said earlier this week. “I think it will be a good project. The \$150,000 isn’t an exorbitant amount of money, but it is enough money to get a good job done.”

Formerly the site of the town’s largest employer, the tannery building complex was [razed this past summer](#) after [decades of effort at redevelopment](#). Only part of one small building remains to be cleared this spring. Town leaders have called the large site near the town’s center the key to revitalizing the small town’s economy.

The tannery site is part of the Penobscot River Restoration Trust’s plan to build a fish bypass, seed some tannery land and dig a channel for the bypass in a project designed to open nearly 1,000 miles of habitat to Atlantic salmon, alewives and other sea-run fish now blocked from migrating upriver.

As part of the Howland project, town officials hope to develop once-contaminated land not occupied by the bypass. The cleanup began in March 2010. More than 50 tons of contaminated soil were taken to the Juniper Ridge Landfill in Old Town.

[A \\$150,000 community enterprise grant](#) will pay for the landscaping project. The Board of Selectmen voted 4-0 about two weeks ago to take a committee recommendation and hire Copeland and CES, Hutton said.

The tannery site’s trail and sidewalk system could be an important feature to that part of town, which includes bridges across the Piscataquis and Penobscot rivers and a town park, Hutton said.

The Maine Department of Transportation is designing a new Howland-Enfield bridge over the Penobscot for construction scheduled in 2016. Town officials are lobbying for a wide sidewalk capable of handling snowmobile and ATV traffic to be part of that design, like those built into the \$10 million Piscataquis River bridge opened last year, Hutton said.

“Having this trail and sidewalk system on this side of the bridge will hopefully help DOT see that we need to connect Enfield and Howland for pedestrians and vehicles with that bridge,” Hutton said.

<http://bangordailynews.com/2013/02/15/news/penobscot/howland-tannery-site-upgrade-set-for-summer/>