1. **DOCUMENT PURPOSE & OVERVIEW:** Beginning in 1975, residents of Durham began to conserve the rural landscape of West Durham, with the creation of the Runaround Pond Recreation Area. Today the Royal River Conservation Trust (RRCT) and others continue to work to conserve the natural, recreational, and agricultural landscape near Runaround Pond. This document attempts to catalog the conservation-related history of Runaround Pond, for adoption in interpretive material, management plans, websites, and other publications.

2. **WATERSHED AND LAND CONSERVATION CONTEXT:** Runaround Pond and much of West Durham flows west as part of the Royal River watershed. Runaround Pond feeds Chandler Brook, also known as the Middle Branch of the Royal River. The remainder of Durham flows east toward the Androscoggin River. The Royal River Conservation Trust prioritizes work in the Royal River watershed, while also working in all of Durham as requested or needed. The Androscoggin Land Trust, similarly, prioritizes work along the Androscoggin while historically working and advocating for conservation in any part of Durham.

In 2016, The Nature Conservancy released analysis prioritizing the streams, ponds, and wetlands of West Durham in the context of climate change resiliency ([TNC Riparian Climate Corridors](https://tnc.org/climate-corridors/)). Relatively undeveloped green spaces of Pownal and West Durham stand out among the areas of southern Maine most likely to support fisheries and wildlife irrespective of future climate scenarios. A regional adaptation of TNC’s map is posted at the bottom of this document.

While in 2017 the conserved land near Runaround Pond exceeds 350 acres, Durham is working to make up for deficits in public open space acreage. Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands’
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) emphasizes the need for public access to water, suburban walking trails, and more. SCORP also provides county-by-county data, which can be expanded to town-by-town analysis. Per SCORP tables, only 2.89 percent of Androscoggin County’s land is conserved (lowest among all Maine counties), as compared to 18.9% statewide and 6.5% in Cumberland County. According to 2016 USFWS data, only 0.83% of Durham’s land is conserved, even while Durham’s population is growing steadily. Durham is thus dramatically underserved by conservation land, compared to most Maine towns. Recent RRCT acquisitions have slightly improved that 2016 statistic, but more work is necessary.

On April 18th, 2017, the Board of Selectmen of Durham unanimously approved two motions:

- To authorize the Royal River Conservation Trust to install a brass plaque on town-managed land at Runaround Pond, and to commemorate and applaud the leadership and generosity of landowners and donors who have helped protect the pond and its surroundings between 1975 and 2017. On June 15, 2017, the following plaque (will be/was) unveiled:

  **Commemorating the Leadership and Generosity of Landowners**
  
  **1975 to 2017**
  
  
  **John and Diane Ackerman**
  
  **Barbara Chesley**
  
  **Duncan Chesley**
  
  **David and Christine Colson**
  
  Thanks to their vision and commitment to conservation, Runaround Pond Recreation Area and Chesley Meadows Preserve are forever protected. The pond, meadows and woods are conserved for current and future generations.

  **Royal River Conservation Trust | Town of Durham | Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands**

- To encourage the Royal River Conservation Trust to continue to conserve strategic parcels of land near Runaround Pond, working with willing landowners, and consulting with town staff, town committees and local businesses, and providing regular updates to the Board of Selectmen.

3. **RUNAROUND POND RECREATION AREA (1970s):** Runaround Pond Recreation Area was acquired by the State of Maine and leased for management to the Town of Durham, with deeds for 133 acres recorded on August 5, 1975. Key players discussed further below include: Town of Durham’s first female Selectman Barbara Chesley, and future founder of the Durham Conservation Commission John Ackerman.
The Runaround project started when Barbara invited local legislator James E. Tierney (Maine House of Representatives, 1972-1980, D-Durham) for a tour of the site, and convinced him that it should be protected. Tierney later served as Maine Attorney General from 1980 to 1990. Tierney, with strong support from Richard Morrell (Maine State Senate, 1973-1974, R-Brunswick), successfully convinced the State of Maine to fund and take ownership of the parcel, with local municipal management. The Governor at the time was Kenneth M. Curtis. The funding came from Maine’s first-ever parks acquisition bond issue, $3 million for state parks, passed by the Maine voters in November of 1973. This source of funds explains why -- to this day -- the land is owned by the State of Maine parks system, while it has always been managed by lease by the Town of Durham.

According to an interview with Connie Footman in 2017, Barbara and John brought the proposal to Durham Town Meeting, with unanimous support.

4. **OLD CROW RANCH (2000s):** In 2008, the Royal River Conservation Trust acquired a 68-acre agricultural conservation easement on Old Crow Ranch (formerly Old Davis Farm) on the Davis Road, with private donations as well as funding from the Land for Maine’s Future program. At the same time, the Sinisi family acquired the farm from Robert Marstaller.


5. **CHESLEY MEADOWS PRESERVE (2010s).** The Royal River Conservation Trust began acquiring land abutting the Runaround Pond Recreation Area in 2015, giving the project the name Chesley Meadows Preserve. Many of the landowners who helped facilitate the project are described further, in later sections of this document.

   - Duncan Chesley (October 2015) in honor of the late Barbara Chesley. 78 acres
   - Christine & David Colson (October 2015). 20 acres.
   - Diane Ackerman (March 2017) in honor of the late John Ackerman. 50 acres.

Funding for the 2015 project came from the Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation, Betsy & Stephen Cushman, Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, landowner donations, various Royal River Conservation Trust (RRCT) donors & members, and grant support for RRCT’s Royal River Water Trail project. Funding for the 2017 project came from Betsy & Stephen Cushman, various Royal River Conservation Trust (RRCT) donors & members, and grant support for RRCT’s...
Royal River Water Trail project including a grant from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund used for minor capital work at the adjacent Runaround Pond Recreation Area.

6. **BARBARA CHESLEY (1925-1999)**

Barbara Cox was born September 13, 1924 in Melrose, Massachusetts. She moved to Durham in 1939 and married Claire Chesley in 1944, after meeting as students at Auburn public schools. She spent one year of college at Bates, after being co- valedictorian at Edward Little High School in Auburn. They raised five sons. She was a member of Durham’s Select Board from 1974 through 1987, serving as the board chair throughout these years, and the board’s first female member. She was board chair when the Recreation Area was acquired in August 1975. She was a respected non-lawyer chair of the Board Overseers of the Bar, and was appointed to chair its Grievance Commission by Governor Angus S. King, Jr. She served on the Executive Committee of the Maine Municipal Association, the State Parole Board, and the board of Legal Services for the Elderly. She died on July 16, 1999.

Barbara was among the earliest supporters of Stephen King’s writing. King lived in the neighborhood in his middle school years in the 1960s. She was a reader and coach for his earliest works, as her sons grew up with the young writer. Her son Chris Chesley’s friendship and collaborations with King are extensively documented. Barbara was first person King called when he sold his first major publication, *Carrie*, to Doubleday for more than $200,000. Chesley family members draw parallels to the characters in the 2014 novel *Revival*, and *The Body* (Stand by Me). The mother in *Revival* is characterized warmly by the author. Barbara is buried in Harmony Grove Cemetery next to the family homestead.

Barbara’s son Duncan Chesley facilitated the creation of the Chesley Meadows Preserve in 2015, asking that it be named for the family. Claire’s early memories include the meadow as a hayfield, and the woods being logged. In 2017, long wet furrows are still notable in the woods of the Preserve, once draining the land for hay.

When serving on the Board of Selectmen, Barbara Cox Chesley named the Chesley Hill Road. The Chesley name came to Durham when Claire married into the Cox family and moved to Durham in the 1940s.

7. **JOHN M. ACKERMAN (1935 - 2014).**

John M. Ackerman received a Bachelor of Science Degree at the New York State School of Forestry at Syracuse University. He worked for the United States Forest Service for many years...
in Oregon before returning to Syracuse to study Landscape Architecture and earn his second degree.

In 1967, John and his family moved to Maine, raising his family on Bowie Hill Road in Durham. John was instrumental in the creation of the Durham Conservation Commission in the early 1980s, and then served on that commission for more than 30 years, and on Planning Board for more than 20 years. With the Conservation Commission and the Androscoggin Land Trust, he was instrumental in the creation of the Durham River Park, the Runaround Pond Recreation Area in 1975, and volunteer land stewardship of the Androscoggin Land Trust’s Lisbon Island Preserve just downstream. As a forester and landscape architect, he drew plans for spaces including Wolfe’s Neck Woods and Mount Blue State Parks. John served on the Board of the Androscoggin Land Trust from 2004 to 2013.


8. **STEPHEN KING (1960s)**

Stephen King spent much of his childhood on Runaround Pond Road, at Methodist Corner in West Durham, moving to town at age 11 in 1958. This photo, used on the dust jacket of the book “The Regulators,” was taken by his brother, David King, in the childhood home.

His first books as well as his most recent books draw on childhood memories of Runaround Pond, the Royal River, Bradbury Mountain, neighborhood cemeteries, churches, farms, and forests. During the time period of his childhood, Runaround Pond was entirely private land, with old mill buildings collapsing into the stream below the dam. All of the roads in the area were gravel.

Especially in the opening pages of his books, King creates memorable scenes of children growing up with woods and farms and swimming holes in fictional towns that have unmistakable references to his childhood haunts. From these scenes he creates fantastic
stories with bats, bloodsuckers, deer, river currents, thunderstorms, buried treasure, logging roads, pond hockey, camp fires, young love, coming-of-age, revelation, revival, and redemption.

Outdoor experiences and connections to nature inspired Stephen King and entertained a generation. The Royal River Conservation Trust works to ensure that all Maine children -- future writers, future scientists, future athletes, future teachers, and everyone -- can grow up with the opportunity to be inspired by woods, water, wildlife, and adventure.

http://portland.bangordailynews.com/2017/05/25/home/paddling-down-stephen-kings-river/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Stephen King Book or Novella, “Movie,” (Stars)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Royal River watershed featured in the book or movie:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Natural features:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Body, “Stand By Me,” (River Phoenix)</td>
<td>Hiking and camping and coming-of-age along the Royal River and railroad tracks, and scenes inspired by Runaround Pond childhood</td>
<td>Leeches Camping Swimming Deer Campfires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead Zone (Christopher Walken)</td>
<td>Opening scene of bonfires and skating on Runaround Pond; lead character lived in Pownal.</td>
<td>Skating Pond Hockey Bonfires</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salem’s Lot (Rob Lowe)</td>
<td>The fictional town of Salem’s (Jerusalem’s) Lot was on the banks of the Royal River. The town was named after a pig, Jerusalem, who escaped to the woods of the town.</td>
<td>Bats Cemeteries Pigs</td>
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<td>Fictional Harmony Hill Cemetery evokes the Runaround Pond neighborhood’s (Davis Road’s) Harmony Grove Cemetery.</td>
<td>Today’s conserved Old Crow Ranch (pigs and more) is just down the road from Harmony Grove Cemetery.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stephen King writes in Danse Macabre that the inspiration for the vampires’ Marsten House once stood on a hill overlooking much of Methodist Comer in West Durham, on Deep Cut Road (Royalsborough Road).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In the movie, local town officials and developers are seen reviewing plans for major subdivisions on the banks of the Royal River.</td>
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https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WZZZ1DGsiEMV1RVS64bOmF3n3nPdbFQ36ZkipZQRLAY/edit
9. **JUDAH CHANDLER (1720-1802)**

In 1766, Judah Chandler built the first sawmill and dam in West Durham, at the head of falls, near the current bridge. The mill dammed Chandler Brook (named after Judah Chandler), which is also known as the Middle Branch of the Royal River. A second sawmill was built in 1777. The dam was constructed for the purpose of providing water power to a grist mill which was later converted to a shingle mill, known as the Old Chandler Mill. Over the years five different mills, including the most-recent Stone Mill operated at various dam locations. Judah chose the narrowest point in the stream to build the mill and created the dam with expertly cut and set granite stones. He built the dam so high that the water created an island and ran around it spilling into a new channel, thus to become known as Runaround Pond. Traces of Chandler’s home, just downstream from the current dam, are still visible. A road crossed the brook below the dam. Various quarry holes are visible near the dam. (Stackpole’s 1899 *History of Durham, Maine*, available on google books, provides more detailed information on Chandler, various mills and their builders.)

Some historic documents, including old deeds referenced in the 1975 deed, refer to the pond as Round About Pond. Other historical documents refer to the Stone Mill Pond, or Run Round Pond.

Judah Chandler was born in Duxbury, Mass, and raised in North Yarmouth, Maine. He first settled in Royalsborough (Durham) in 1776. He was a coaster who sailed up and down the sea coast bringing the raw materials out and finished goods and supplies in, a lumber surveyor, and saw mill operator. He spent time up and down the whole Maine coast building saw mills and helping found towns like Jonesboro, Maine.

On June 12, 1775 Judah Chandler was on the ship Unity when it engaged, successfully, HMS Margarettta off Machias. This is considered the first naval battle of the Revolutionary War, and the birth of the US Navy, five days before the Battle of Bunker Hill. Judah and one of his sons
(who died in the Revolution) are buried in Davis Road’s Harmony Grove Cemetery with simple stones.

In 1952 the concrete bridge just upstream of the dam was demolished. Demolition rubble was placed as a dam or berm on the pond’s shoreline at the head of the easterly bypass channel (the Runaround) such that since that most of the time runoff instead continues to go over the mill dam. The Runaround channel (gully) passes underneath Runaround Pond Road near its intersection with Davis Road, and is active today during high water. Sometime prior to 1971, the west foundation wall (Stone Mill, stone foundation) of the mill building collapsed into the stream channel. Other old granite retaining walls remain today.

Judah Chandler is related to the New Gloucester Chandler family. In 2016 with Royal River Conservation Trust and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, members of the Chandler family conserved New Gloucester’s Chandler Mill Pond (Lily Pond), near the headwaters of the Royal River’s main stem.
10. **NATIVE AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY**: Reference to confidential archaeological data in town comprehensive plan, located between the pond’s two branches.

11. **CELLAR HOLES AND OLD ROADS**: On the Old Range Road, atop a knoll southeast of the long snowmobile bridge (Ingerson ownership? Adjacent?). The Old Range Road that extends from Chesley Hill Road through the Preserve was discontinued by the town in 1933. Also need information on two large granite cellar holes downriver from the dam (see Judah Chandler, above). Also note the various quarry holes (some now frog ponds) near the dam.

12. **MAINE FOREST YURTS & BOB CROWLEY (“SURVIVOR” WINNER)**

- [http://www.businessinsider.com/survivor-maine-forest-yurts-2016-9](http://www.businessinsider.com/survivor-maine-forest-yurts-2016-9)
- [https://maineforestyurts.com/](https://maineforestyurts.com/)
- [http://www.pressherald.com/2014/02/17/survivor_winner_s_new_pursuit_setting_up_yurt_camps_in_forest/](http://www.pressherald.com/2014/02/17/survivor_winner_s_new_pursuit_setting_up_yurt_camps_in_forest/)

12. **PRESERVE AND PARK INFORMATION, MAPS, PHOTOS**
