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National Park Service  
Cultural Landscapes Inventory  
2010



Blow-Me-Down Mill  
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

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## **Table of Contents**

Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan

Concurrence Status

Geographic Information and Location Map

Management Information

National Register Information

Chronology & Physical History

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Condition

Treatment

Bibliography & Supplemental Information

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## **Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan**

### **Inventory Summary**

#### **The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:**

##### **CLI General Information:**

###### **Purpose and Goals of the CLI**

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the national park system, is one of the most ambitious initiatives of the National Park Service (NPS) Park Cultural Landscapes Program. The CLI is an evaluated inventory of all landscapes having historical significance that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources through a public planning process and in which the NPS has or plans to acquire any legal interest. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into a national database. In addition, for landscapes that are not currently listed on the National Register and/or do not have adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures, assists the NPS in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2006), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two GPRA goals are associated with the CLI: bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (Goal 1a7) and increasing the number of CLI records that have complete, accurate, and reliable information (Goal 1b2B).

###### **Scope of the CLI**

The information contained within the CLI is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries and archives and at NPS regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the site's overall significance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features, and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape's overall condition. The CLI also provides an illustrative site plan that indicates major features within the inventory unit. Unlike cultural landscape reports, the CLI does not provide management recommendations or

treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape.

### **Inventory Unit Description:**

Blow-Me-Down Mill is a forty-acre component landscape of Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, located in Sullivan County, New Hampshire. The study area includes the late-nineteenth-century built features of the Blow-Me-Down Mill and dam, the Stone Arch Bridge, a mill pond, and several acres of natural wetland situated along the Blow-Me-Down Brook and surrounded by forest vegetation. State Route 12A travels along the west side of the property, providing views to the wetland and mill building to passing motorists. The mill property is located just east of Aspet, the house, studios, and gardens of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, a famous American sculptor and one of the founders of the Cornish Art Colony.

### **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

Charles C. Beaman, a wealthy New York City lawyer, purchased land in Cornish, New Hampshire, on the east side of the Connecticut River in the early 1880s and built his seasonal home, Blowmedown Farm, on a hill overlooking the western hills of Vermont. The site of Blow-Me-Down Mill sat east of Blowmedown Farm, across the main north-south road in the region, River Road. Two streams, Blow-Me-Down Brook and Blow-Me-Up Brook, provided the energy to power a mill that predated Beaman's purchase of the property.

Beaman enjoyed surrounding himself with creative people and, as a wealthy art patron who was one of the first and most notable seasonal residents of Cornish, he was in a position to attract a community of artists to the area beginning in 1884. He was responsible for inviting Augustus Saint-Gaudens and his family to Cornish in 1885, beginning Saint-Gaudens's more than twenty year association with the area. Saint-Gaudens served as the anchor of the blossoming community of seasonal residents who were associated with the arts. Soon, scores of painters, sculptors, writers, playwrights, and actors were making Cornish their home and the Cornish Colony was established.

The town of Cornish, with financial support from Beaman, completed a handsome dry-laid stone arched bridge across the Blow-Me-Up Brook in 1887. Several years later, Beaman replaced the existing dam on the Blow-Me-Down Brook and built a new grist mill. Beaman's mill became a center of commerce for the small agricultural town of Cornish. The mill served as a gristmill and grain supplier, selling corn oats, bran, and animal feed. Records show that he served many local customers, farmers, and seasonal residents alike, but was his own best customer, consuming most of the grain and feed generated at the mill for his Blowmedown Farm.

Beaman died in 1900, leaving his estate to his wife Hettie. In the early part of the twentieth century the agricultural economy of New Hampshire was adversely affected by the success of farming in the Midwest. The increased mechanization of the farming industry reduced the need for local mills and the Blow-Me-Down Mill closed down in circa 1920. While the mill stood vacant, the site was manipulated by the State of New Hampshire during a 1927 road realignment project. The tight curve along River Road (State Route 12A) at the Stone Arch Bridge was straightened to allow for higher vehicular speeds and in the process the downstream side of the bridge was extended to make way for the new roadbed.

## Blow-Me-Down Mill

### Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

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The Cornish Colony continued to be an active community until approximately 1930, after which the group fragmented due to the dispersal or death of many of the key members. In 1950 Beaman's heirs, at this time his son's widow, sold the mill to non-family members. The mill building stood vacant except for a short time in the 1950s when it served as a doctor's office. The landscape was altered significantly in 1958 when the State of New Hampshire again realigned Route 12A, formerly known as River Road, resulting in the filling in of some of the western areas of the pond, altering the topography around the mill building, and bypassing the Stone Arch Bridge completely. After changing hands several times, the property was sold to the National Park Service in 1984 for inclusion in Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.

#### SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Blow-Me-Down Mill landscape is nationally significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with the Cornish Colony for the period 1884-1930. The period begins with the arrival of Charles C. Beaman, a wealthy New York attorney, local landowner, and the founder of the Cornish Colony, in Cornish in 1884. The period extends to 1930, the end of the most active period of the colony. The construction of the earliest surviving contributing resource, the Stone Arch Bridge, dates to 1887, followed by the Blow-Me-Down Mill built in 1891. It was Beaman who lured Augustus Saint-Gaudens to the area in the summer of 1885, beginning the sculptor's more than twenty year association with Cornish. Saint-Gaudens became the anchor of the community of artists who began to summer in the New Hampshire countryside. By the early 1900s, the colony had grown to include scores of artists, musicians, writers, and patrons of the arts who congregated to gain inspiration from nature and each other's company.

The Blow-Me-Down Mill was part of the local landscape known to Augustus Saint-Gaudens and other Cornish Colonists. Saint-Gaudens was intimately familiar with its resources, which were directly adjacent to his property, Aspet. In addition to being a patron of Beaman's mill, Saint-Gaudens and his assistants were known to use the mill pond for recreation, skating on the frozen surface in the long winter months.

#### ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

Significant landscape characteristics identified for the Blow-Me-Down Mill landscape include natural systems and features, spatial organization, vegetation, circulation, buildings and structures, constructed water features, and small scale features. The landscape of the Blow-Me-Down Mill property is defined by the natural systems and structures that were extant during the period of significance. The mill landscape is set in a ravine northeast of where the Blow-Me-Up and Blow-Me-Down Brooks converge before flowing into the Connecticut River. Steep topography on the east side of the ravine separates the property from the neighboring Aspet landscape, and rolling terrain on the west side of the ravine is home to the Blowmedown Farm. Mature forest vegetation surrounds the site and wetland growth encroaches on the open water of the mill pond. The structures, including the Blow-Me-Down Mill, Stone Arch Bridge, and stone retaining walls, are built from native materials using similar craftsmanship. The setting of the mill, stonework, and pond is especially bucolic as seen from the Stone

Arch Bridge.

Since the period of significance, portions of the landscape of the Blow-Me-Down Mill have been altered. Most noticeably, State Route 12A, formerly known as River Road, which runs along the site's western boundary, has been straightened and regraded to allow higher vehicular speeds. The realigned route bypassed the original roadbed of the Stone Arch Bridge. The realignment also resulted in the alteration of some of the pond edge and modification of the front lawn area at the mill building. Vegetation has matured in the surrounding forests and in the upper portion of the pond, where sedimentation has provided the ideal growing conditions for wetland plants. The amount of existing open water is much lower than during the historic period.

Due to the increase in wetland vegetation and sediment deposition that has significantly altered the appearance of the pond, the Blow-Me-Down Mill landscape is in fair condition. The site shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values.

Site Plan



*Blow-Me-Down Mill landscape, one of four component landscapes of Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park.*

Blow-Me-Down Mill  
 Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site



Site plan of Blow-Me-Down Mill.

**Property Level and CLI Numbers**

<b>Inventory Unit Name:</b>	Blow-Me-Down Mill
<b>Property Level:</b>	Component Landscape
<b>CLI Identification Number:</b>	975558
<b>Parent Landscape:</b>	650051

**Park Information**

<b>Park Name and Alpha Code:</b>	Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site -SAGA
<b>Park Organization Code:</b>	1915
<b>Park Administrative Unit:</b>	Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

**CLI Hierarchy Description**

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site contains four component landscapes, Aspet, Blow-Me-Down Mill, the Saint-Gaudens Farm, and Blow-Me-Down Farm.

## Concurrence Status

**Inventory Status:** Complete

### Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

The Blow-Me-Down Mill landscape at Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site was documented in 2009 as part of the preparation for a Cultural Landscape Report. Several site visits were conducted between 2007 and 2009 to document the existing conditions of the landscape. The park's contact for cultural resources is Steve Walasewicz (603-675-2175 x 110, [steve\\_walasewicz@nps.gov](mailto:steve_walasewicz@nps.gov)).

### Concurrence Status:

<b>Park Superintendent Concurrence:</b>	Yes
<b>Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:</b>	08/04/2010
<b>Date of Concurrence Determination:</b>	11/15/1985

### Concurrence Graphic Information:

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY  
CONCURRENCE FORM

Blow-Me-Down Mill  
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for Blow-Me-Down Mill including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair

**Good:** indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

**Fair:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

**Poor:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for Blow-Me-Down Mill is hereby approved and accepted.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

8/4/10  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Park concurrence on the findings of this CLI was received on August 4, 2010.*

## Geographic Information & Location Map

**Inventory Unit Boundary Description:**

The Blow-Me-Down Mill property includes the Blow-Me-Down Mill, Stone Arch Bridge, Blow-Me-Down Pond, and forty acres of forest and wetland on the east side of State Route 12A (formerly River Road). The property is adjacent to the west boundary of the Aspet tract of Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site. Beginning at the Stone Arch Bridge, the boundary runs along the east side of the pond, past the dam, and mill and travels in a roughly northerly direction until meeting the Blow-Me-Up Brook. The boundary then meanders west and north along the brook until turning sharply south, following the brook until it runs into Route 12A. The property line follows Route 12A back to the point of beginning.

**State and County:**

**State:** NH

**County:** Sullivan County

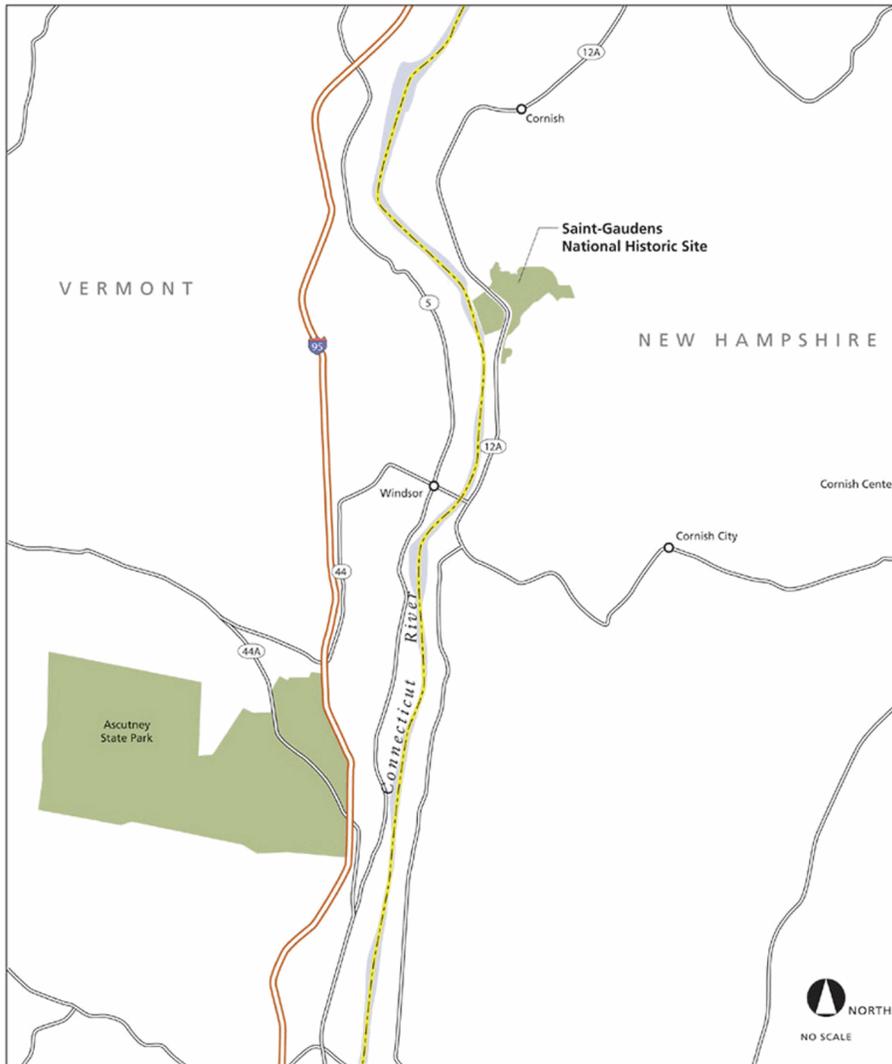
**Size (Acres):** 40.00

**Boundary UTMS:**

<b>Source:</b>	USGS Map 1:24,000
<b>Type of Point:</b>	Area
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 83
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	18
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	712,171
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	4,819,304
<b>Source:</b>	USGS Map 1:24,000
<b>Type of Point:</b>	Area
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 83
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	18
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	711,806
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	4,819,729
<b>Source:</b>	USGS Map 1:24,000
<b>Type of Point:</b>	Area
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 83
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	18
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	711,929
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	4,820,102
<b>Source:</b>	USGS Map 1:24,000
<b>Type of Point:</b>	Area
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 83
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	18
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	711,969
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	4,819,983
<b>Source:</b>	USGS Map 1:24,000

<b>Type of Point:</b>	Area
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 83
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	18
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	712,207
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	4,819,928
<b>Source:</b>	USGS Map 1:24,000
<b>Type of Point:</b>	Area
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 83
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	18
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	712,189
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	4,819,787
<b>Source:</b>	USGS Map 1:24,000
<b>Type of Point:</b>	Area
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 83
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	18
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	712,143
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	4,819,716
<b>Source:</b>	USGS Map 1:24,000
<b>Type of Point:</b>	Area
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 83
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	18
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	712,233
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	4,819,514

**Location Map:**



*Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, including the study area, Blow-Me-Down Mill, is located in Sullivan County, New Hampshire, on the east side of the Connecticut River. OCLP, 2008.*

**Regional Context:**

**Type of Context:** Cultural

**Description:**

The Blow-Me-Up Brook was dammed in the mid-1800s to provide power for a small mill. The property now known as the Blow-Me-Down Mill was purchased and improved by Charles C. Beaman in the 1880s. He replaced the dam and built a grist mill that serviced the local population from the late-1880s through the 1920s. After this time, the property was intermittently occupied before falling into disrepair by the 1960s. The building has been vacant for decades. The property is now managed by the National Park Service.

**Type of Context:** Physiographic

**Description:**

The Blow-Me-Down Mill landscape is situated in a valley between two steep rises. The surrounding landscape is heavily forested; thick woods and the adjacent landforms block views to the nearby Connecticut River to the west and the Aspet landscape to the east. Blow-Me-Up Brook is heavily sedimented north of the dam and is dominated by wetland vegetation. A small amount of open water is located immediately north of the dam.

**Type of Context:** Political

**Description:**

The Blow-Me-Down Mill is located in the town of Cornish in Sullivan County, New Hampshire. The mill has been part of Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site since 1984.

## Management Information

### General Management Information

**Management Category:** Must be Preserved and Maintained

**Management Category Date:** 08/04/2010

**Management Category Explanatory Narrative:**

As the Blow-Me-Down Mill and Stone Arch Bridge are listed as nationally significant resources on the National Register of Historic Places, the Blow-Me-Down Mill landscape meets the management category, “Must be Preserved and Maintained.” An amendment to the park’s enabling legislation was passed in 1976, authorizing the park to acquire up to sixty-four additional acres. This legislation allowed the park to acquire the forty-acre Blow-Me-Down Mill property in 1984 to protect resources associated with Augustus Saint-Gaudens, including the mill building, the Stone Arch Bridge, the historic viewshed, and surrounding wetlands.

**Public Access:**

**Type of Access:** Other Restrictions

**Explanatory Narrative:**

The Blow-Me-Down Mill property is open to visitors when the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site is open, between Memorial Day and the end of October. The mill building is not currently open to the public.

**Adjacent Lands Information**

**Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?** No

## National Register Information

**Significance Criteria:** A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

**Period of Significance:**

**Time Period:** AD 1884 - 1930  
**Historic Context Theme:** Expressing Cultural Values  
**Subtheme:** Painting and Sculpture  
**Facet:** Art Colonies 1915-1930

**Area of Significance:**

**Area of Significance Category:** Art

**Statement of Significance:**

The Blow-Me-Down Mill landscape is nationally significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with the Cornish Colony for the period 1884-1930. The period begins with the arrival of Charles C. Beaman, a wealthy New York attorney, local landowner, and the founder of the Cornish Colony, in Cornish in 1884. The period extends to 1930, the end of the most active period of the colony. The construction of the earliest surviving contributing resource, the Stone Arch Bridge, dates to 1887, followed by the Blow-Me-Down Mill built in 1891. It was Beaman who lured Augustus Saint-Gaudens to the area in the summer of 1885, beginning the sculptor's more than twenty year association with Cornish. Saint-Gaudens became the anchor of the community of artists who began to summer in the New Hampshire countryside. By the early 1900s, the colony had grown to include scores of artists, musicians, writers, and patrons of the arts who congregated to gain inspiration from nature and each other's company.

The Blow-Me-Down Mill was part of the local landscape known to Augustus Saint-Gaudens and other Cornish Colonists. Saint-Gaudens was intimately familiar with its resources, which were directly adjacent to his property, Aspet. In addition to being a patron of Beaman's mill, Saint-Gaudens and his assistants were known to use the mill pond for recreation, skating on the frozen surface in the long winter months.

## Chronology & Physical History

### Cultural Landscape Type and Use

**Cultural Landscape Type:** Vernacular

**Current and Historic Use/Function:**

**Primary Historic Function:** Manufacturing Facility (Mill) - Other

**Primary Current Use:** Outdoor Recreation-Other

<b>Other Use/Function</b>	<b>Other Type of Use or Function</b>
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Dam - Concrete (Gravity)	Historic
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Commerce/Trade-Other	Historic
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Processing	Historic
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Wetland	Current
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**Current and Historic Names:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Type of Name</b>
Blow-Me-Down Mill	Both Current And Historic

**Ethnographic Study Conducted:** No Survey Conducted

**Chronology:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Annotation</b>
AD 1830 - 1839	Built	The first mill is built on the site of the Blow-Me-Down Mill.
AD 1868	Purchased/Sold	Owner Ruben Davis sells the property to Chester F. Pike.
AD 1882 - 1884	Purchased/Sold	From 1882-1884, Chester F. Pike sells the property to Charles C. Beaman, a wealthy New York city attorney who marries into a local land owning family.
AD 1884	Established	Beaman arrives in Cornish, and begins what will become the community of artists known as the Cornish Colony.
AD 1885	Built	Beaman builds a bridge across the Blow-Me-Up Brook to connect his property on both banks.
AD 1887	Built	The town of Cornish builds the dry-laid Stone Arch Bridge across the Blow-Me-Up Brook.

Blow-Me-Down Mill  
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

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AD 1887 - 1891	Built	Beaman hires Joseph Morris Wells of the architectural firm McKim, Mead, and White to design a new mill in 1887 to replace the one built in the 1830s. However, after the death of Wells, Beaman hires George F. Babb of Babb, Cook, and Willard to finish the building. The new building is connected to the Stone Arch Bridge by a long, dry-laid retaining wall on the west side of the brook.
AD 1891	Built	A blacksmith shop is built south of the mill building.
AD 1898	Moved	The Blacksmith shop is moved off the property to the west side of River Road.
AD 1900	Land Transfer	Beaman's estate, including the Blow-Me-Down Mill property passes to his wife, Hettie, after his death.
AD 1909	Altered	The original wooden dam is rebuilt using concrete.
AD 1917	Land Transfer	Hettie Beaman's estate, including the Blow-Me-Down Mill property passes to her son, William F. Beaman, after her death.
AD 1920	Abandoned	The Blow-Me-Down Mill ceases operation and the building is vacant.
AD 1927	Altered	River Road, the road adjacent to the mill and pond, is realigned to allow for higher vehicular speeds. The stone arch bridge is lengthened on its downstream side and the roadbed is moved west to simplify the steeply curved road at the bridge.
AD 1934	Built	William F. Beaman rebuilds the 1909 dam out of reinforced concrete.
AD 1938	Destroyed	A hurricane washes out the dam and the town of Cornish rebuilds it again.
AD 1950	Land Transfer	Vera Beaman, William F. Beaman's widow, sells the property to James Campbell Lewis.
AD 1950 - 1959	Inhabited	Lewis rents the mill to Dr. Carl Rodney Comstock for use as a doctor's office.

Blow-Me-Down Mill  
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

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AD 1957 - 1958	Altered	The State of New Hampshire realigns Route 12A to straighten the meandering segment north of the Stone Arch Bridge. The state also realigns the segment at the Stone Arch Bridge, further bypassing the original road bed crossing the bridge.
AD 1964	Established	Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site is established (Blow-Me-Down Mill property is not included).
AD 1967	Destroyed	The ell of the mill building collapses and is removed.
AD 1972	Land Transfer	Lewis sells the property to the National Park Foundation, a land holding agency.
AD 1978 - 1979	Stabilized	The mill building is repaired and stabilized.
AD 1984	Land Transfer	The National Park Service purchases the property from the National Park Foundation for inclusion in Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.
	Stabilized	A channel in the pond is dredged and the dam is repaired.
AD 2001	Built	The park and the Student Conservation Association build a trail and boardwalk to the mill pond.
AD 2006	Stabilized	The park stabilizes the Stone Arch Bridge.

### **Physical History:**

The following text is extracted from the “Cultural Landscape Report for Blow-Me-Down Mill, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site” (April 2009 draft). Graphics for this section are located at the end of this report.

#### INTRODUCTION

Early settlers of New Hampshire’s Connecticut River Valley relied on water power from the region’s abundant creeks and rivers to assist in agricultural production, the main livelihood for the vast majority of residents. The local rolling topography and moderate precipitation created the raw material necessary to convert natural resources into energy. The documented history of the Blow-Me-Down Mill property begins with Cornish resident Charles C. Beaman, who arrived in Cornish by 1884 and soon after built a mill on the site of an existing dam along the Blow-Me-Down Brook. As a friend and neighbor of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Beaman’s mill and pond were utilized by Saint-Gaudens for business and pleasure on a regular basis, illustrating the interconnectivity of Cornish residents. The mill served as a community resource at the turn-of-the century before falling into obsolescence by the 1920s. Following the structure’s active period, the property remained underutilized through much of the twentieth century.

#### 1830-1920, THE CONSTRUCTION OF BLOW-ME-DOWN-MILL AND STONE ARCH BRIDGE

The first mill on the site of Blow-Me-Down Mill was built in the 1830s by early Cornish land owner Ruben Davis, who established a sawmill on the Blow-Me-Down Brook after relocating to the area from Boston. It is unknown what the original dam looked like or how it affected the upstream portions of the Blow-Me-Down Brook. After owning the land around the mill for thirty-three years, Davis sold the property to Captain Chester F. Pike who retained the property from 1868 to 1882.

Documented changes to the mill and surrounding lands were begun by Charles C. Beaman, a New York City attorney who married Hettie Sherman Evarts, the daughter of Senator William Maxwell Evarts, a professional contact of Beaman’s, who owned vast acreage on the west side of the Connecticut River. To locate his new home in proximity to Hettie’s family, Beaman purchased several hundred acres from Chester Pike between 1882 and 1884 and named his estate Blowmedown Farm. Beaman centered his Cornish farm on a rolling hill between the Connecticut River and Blow-Me-Down Brook (Figures 1 and 2). This placement of the farmstead provided expansive views of the river and west hills, made all the more prominent due to the deforested landscape.

As a landowner with substantial acreage, Beaman was involved in numerous aspects of the agricultural economy. He ran his own farm, later a grist mill, and served as a landlord for several properties, including the Huggins Farm, located east of Blowmedown Farm and the mill property, that he rented to the Saint-Gaudens family beginning in 1885. Beaman was also a supporter of the arts and enjoyed surrounding himself with creative people. He was largely responsible for luring Augustus Saint-Gaudens to Cornish in 1885 and is considered the catalyst

of the developing Cornish Colony.

Beaman was actively involved in making improvements to his expansive property. In his journal, the *Blowmedown Record*, Beaman documented building woods roads, bridges, and water pipes between various parcels on his estate. As recorded on October 16, 1885, workmen “Began cutting and [building] roads today from Blowmeup [Aspet] through woods, went down hill and arrived to the pond on Blowmedown Brook...” A bridge was built across the Blow-Me-Down Brook less than a year later to connect Beaman’s land on both sides of the Brook. Beaman provided water from local springs to several dwellings on his property. As recorded on October 25, 1886, “Today we finished putting in the new  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch pipe from the reservoir on the hill to this house [Blowmeup]. The old pipe taken up was in good order and I wired it to connect the Johnson Spring with the Creely Spring, Blowmeup and also to bring water to the Barker house which has just been moved on the hill by the mill.”

The bridge across the Blow-Me-Down Brook that Beaman built in 1886 may have been made obsolete by September 1887 with the construction of the Stone Arch Bridge. The town of Cornish built the structure, hiring local stonemason Jaboz Hammond to perform the skilled work. Hammond constructed the handsome bridge with local dry-laid stone downstream from the first dam and mill, using a single arch design (Figure 3). River Road, the main north-south thoroughfare on the east side of the Connecticut River, curved sharply north and south of the Stone Arch Bridge to accommodate the bridge alignment.

Beaman’s mill, possibly the same one built by Davis in the 1830s, was likely outdated by the late 1800s. He contracted with Joseph Morris Wells of the architectural firm McKim, Mead, and White to design a new mill in 1887, the same architect who designed the Stone Arch Bridge. Wells died before finishing the building so Beaman hired George F. Babb, an architect with the New York City firm Babb, Cook, and Willard, to finish the design.

When completed, a defining element of the east side of the mill was its structural connection with the tall, dry-laid retaining wall on the west bank of the brook, upstream from the bridge (Figure 4). The retaining wall stretched all the way between the bridge and dam, creating the mill’s east foundation wall. Blow-Me-Down Mill was a two-and-a-half story building, with the first floor made of stone and wood framing above, situated directly on the east side of River Road. The cantilevered second story projected over the front, or west side, of the mill, creating a protected area at the front door. A tall front stoop allowed wagons to pull up to the door at the level of the first floor, making for easy loading and unloading of cargo. A one-story ell attached to the main structure on the south side (Figure 5). A wood-shingled blacksmith’s shop was built against the stone retaining wall, south of the mill ell, around the time of the mill’s construction. Energy from the Blow-Me-Down Brook spilling over a wooden dam powered the mill.

It is unknown what the Blow-Me-Down Pond looked like prior to Beaman’s improvements but photographs of the area circa 1900 show a substantial body of water with a sinuous edge (see Figure 2). Though much of the regional landscape was deforested for agricultural purposes, the edge of Blow-Me-Down Pond was surrounded by forest. Steep slopes that made for poor

cropland remained forested east of the pond. Likewise, steep, forested topography predominated west of the pond, on top of which sat Beaman's Blow-Me-Down farmstead. North of the Stone Arch Bridge, River Road meandered along the west bank of Blow-Me-Down Pond, curving gently around the irregular pond bank (Figure 6). It was a single-track, packed-earth road lined by a wooden-rail fence at the water's edge.

Beaman opened his mill late in 1891. He recalled on December 5, "The wheel in the mill is running and we cracked the first bushel of corn today." As shown in Beaman's log book, his mill served as a gristmill and a grain supplier, including corn, oats, bran, and mixed animal feed. He retained the price for grinding grain at four cents a bushel for the years 1897-1900 but prices for grain and animal feed fluctuated during the same period. Patterns established in his log show that the most grain was ground in the winter months, after the fall harvest. Sales of grain and feed remained constant year round.

Beaman recorded the names of his mill customers, indicating that he served an interesting cross section of farming and non-farming Cornish residents. For example, Frank Johnson, a farmer who owned a large farm just southeast of Aspet, was a regular customer and brought grain to the mill weekly. Non-farming patrons included Augusta Saint-Gaudens, who by this time lived in Cornish year round at their home Aspet, up the hill to the east of the mill, and seasonal resident and author Annie Lazarus. Yet of all his patrons, Beaman was his own best customer, illustrating the extent of his agricultural activities.

Beaman died in 1900, leaving the estate to his wife Hettie. The farm and mill remained in operation under the supervision of hired hands, as they did during Beaman's lifetime. Though records of the Blow-Me-Down Mill do not survive past 1900, it is likely that profits declined in later years. The availability and low cost of grain from the Midwest lowered profit margins and hurt farmers all over New England. This is illustrated by a decline of almost 34,000 New Hampshire residents employed in agriculture between 1870 and 1900. Although seasonal residents and Cornish Colony members likely still purchased grain and feed from the mill, the amount of grain processed probably decreased significantly. By 1910, the Blow-Me-Down Mill was the only local mill still operating and by circa 1920, it too closed down.

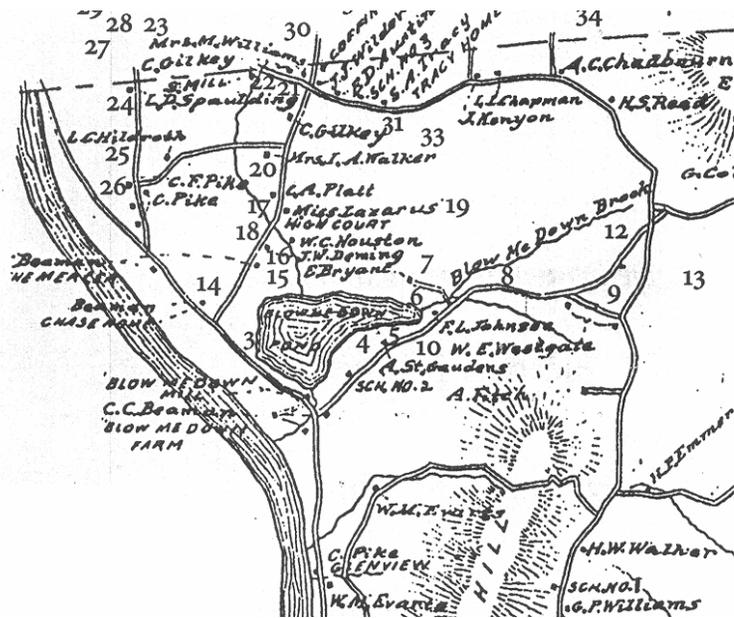
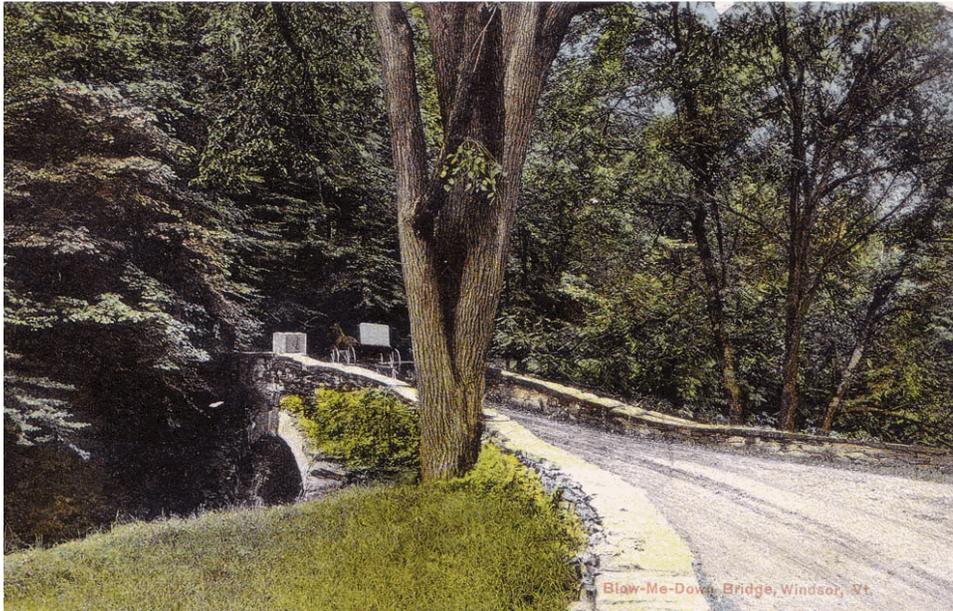


Figure 1. Detail of an 1892 map of Cornish, New Hampshire. Beaman's Blowmedown Farm is pictured to the left of the Blow-Me-Down Pond. Image from *Footprints of the Past: Images of Cornish NH and the Cornish Colony*.



Figure 2. View of Blowmedown Farm, looking north, circa 1900. The Connecticut River appears in the middle ground and the Blow-Me-Down mill pond is at image right. SAGA archives, #1349.



*Figure 3. Stone Arch Bridge, circa 1910. This view of the bridge, looking southwest, shows a mature elm in the foreground and the heavily forested areas south of the study area. Post card collection, Cornish Historical Society.*



*Figure 4. View north of the mill, dam, and blacksmith shed (in foreground), circa 1891. SAGA archives, #2404.*



*Figure 5. Blow-Me-Down Mill, circa 1920. This photograph was taken around the time the mill ceased operating. Post card collection, Cornish Historical Society.*



*Figure 6. Children in a donkey cart traveling north on River Road, circa 1900. The road curves along the edge of the mill pond, at image left. SAGA archives, # 1352.*

#### 1921-1971, EVOLUTION OF THE PROPERTY AFTER THE CLOSING OF BLOW-ME-DOWN MILL

The use of the mill in the 1920s and 1930s is unknown. Although the mill wheel stopped turning, the dam continued to regulate the flow of water from the Blow-Me-Down Pond. William F. Beaman, Charles and Hettie's son, inherited Blow-Me-Down Farm in 1917 after his mother's death.

Higher speeds associated with automobile traffic made older roads and affiliated infrastructure unsafe by the 1920s, including River Road near Blow-Me-Down Pond. In response, the State of New Hampshire realigned the road in 1927 to smooth the complex 'S' curve at the Stone Arch Bridge. In the process, the bridge was lengthened on its downstream side and a new stone arch was built at the outfall (Figure 7). This new configuration brought the River Road closer to the stone retaining wall between the bridge and the mill, necessitating a new retaining wall to step down to existing grade.

Although the original wooden dam was rebuilt with concrete in 1909, William Beaman replaced it with another concrete structure in 1934 (Figures 8 and 9). Only four years later, the dam failed during a major hurricane and was rebuilt by the town of Cornish. Period photography, including a 1939 aerial image, illustrates the character of the mill pond and surrounding landscape around the time of the hurricane. Sedimentation had begun to encroach on the amount of open water previously recorded in 1900, notably along the north side of the pond and at the mouth of the Blow-Me-Down Brook where the water velocity slowed.

William Beaman's widow, Vera, sold Blow-Me-Down Farm and most of its associated properties, including the mill property, to James Campbell Lewis in 1950. Lewis rented the mill to Dr. Carl Rodney Comstock Jr., who converted the building into a doctor's office. This may have represented the first active use of the mill in several decades. Period photographs show the building in need of repair during this era, but its condition did not pose a serious hindrance as it remained a doctor's office for most of the 1950s (Figure 10).

In spite of the road realignment at Stone Arch Bridge in 1927, photographs from the 1950s show River Road continuing to wind along the curving southwest bank of the pond, traveling directly in front of the mill's front door (see previous figure and Figure 11). This changed in 1958 when the State of New Hampshire again realigned what was then known as Route 12A, rebuilding the road from the northern portion of the Blow-Me-Down Pond to south of the Stone Arch Bridge. The Department of Transportation straightened the formerly meandering road into a single, wide-arching curve to allow for higher vehicular speeds (Figure 12). In the process, the western extents of the pond were filled, creating a smooth, regular edge and reducing the amount of open water (Figures 13 and 14).

Near the mill, the roadbed was elevated approximately ten feet above historic grade and pulled west of the mill's porch so passing cars were now approximately fifteen feet away from the building and level with the second story (Figure 15). A steep grass bank began at the mill's porch, leading up to a metal guard rail and the new road bed. The State constructed a wide concrete extension to the downstream side of the Stone Arch Bridge, changing the historic character of the bridge. The upstream side of the bridge was untouched by the improvements but was almost entirely bypassed by the new road alignment that swung west of the old bridge.





*Figure 9. Blow-Me-Down Dam, 1934. During William Beaman's ownership of the property, the dam was rebuilt using reinforced concrete. New Hampshire Water Resources Board, 53.01-3.*



*Figure 10. Blow-Me-Down Mill, circa 1952. During the 1950s, the mill was used as a doctor's office. SAGA archives, #1344.*



Figure 11. Enlargement of a 1952 aerial photograph of the Blow-Me-Down Mill pond. This image shows the pond prior to the realignment project of 1958. SAGA flat files.

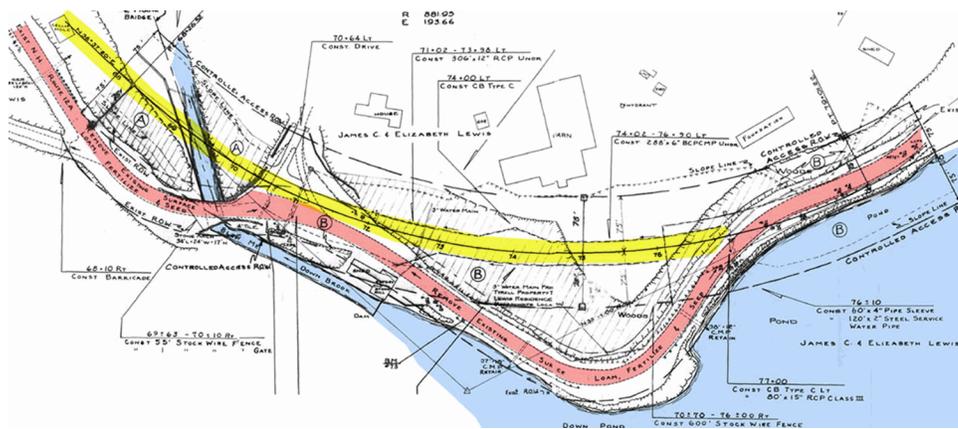


Figure 12. Detail of plan for the road realignment along Route 12A, 1958. The old roadbed is shaded pink and the new road is shaded yellow. Image courtesy of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.

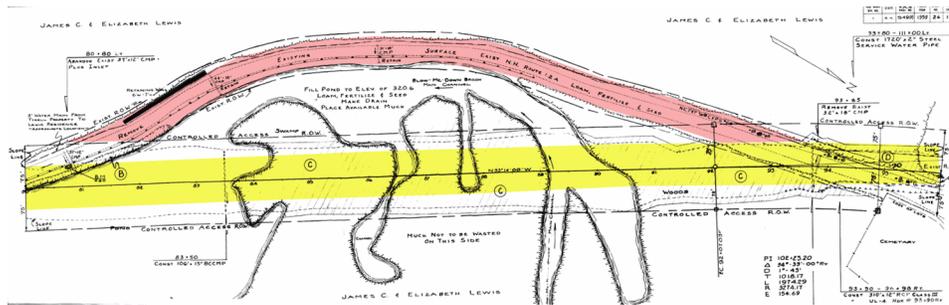


Figure 13. Detail of a plan for the road realignment along Route 12A, 1958. The old roadbed is shaded pink and the new road is shaded yellow. Image courtesy of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.



*Figure 14. Enlargement of a 1963 aerial photograph of the Blow-Me-Down Mill, dam, and pond. SAGA flat files.*



*Figure 15. Blow-Me-Down Mill, as seen from Route 12A, circa 1966. SAGA image, 1183a.*

#### 1972-2010, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ACQUISITION AND OWNERSHIP

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site was established in 1965, consisting of 83 acres surrounding Augustus Saint-Gaudens's former home, Aspet, and its associated landscape. Not long after, the desire to include the Blow-Me-Down Mill property in the park's holdings emerged and the National Park Foundation, a non-profit land holding body, began inquiries with James Campbell Lewis to purchase the property (Figure 16). The transfer took place in 1972, with the National Park Foundation purchasing the mill, pond, and lands to the north and east.

President Ford authorized \$85,000 for the purchase of the Blow-Me-Down Mill property in 1976 but it took seven years to appropriate the funding. In 1984, the National Park Service purchased the parcel from the National Park Foundation. By this time, the property had changed from its historic condition in several significant ways. Major road improvements had altered the course of Route 12A, impacting the Blow-Me-Down Pond and the relationship

between the road and the mill building. Sedimentation over many decades reduced the amount of open water and increased the growth of vegetation in and around the pond. The mill's condition was compromised through years of deferred maintenance and by the removal of the ell that collapsed in 1967. Likewise, weathering and age had taken a toll on the dam and the appearance and function of the Stone Arch Bridge had been changed by twentieth century activities.

The National Park Service began addressing the many condition issues of the property by making repairs to the mill, some in fact even prior to owning the property outright. Contractors replaced the roof and siding of the Mill in the summer of 1978, greatly improving the appearance of the outside of the building. Pest infestation in the building was eliminated by fumigation in 1979.

With the mill stabilized, attention turned to the dam. A National Park Service Regional Office initiative about alternative energy in the early 1980s spurred investigation into the potential to harness power from the Blow-Me-Down dam. A study by the Department of Energy concluded that the potential power created would not make a hydroelectric power investment financially feasible. Following that exploration, an outside group hired to assess the condition of the dam found it need of repair. The report documented aged concrete in the spillway, buttresses, and abutments, detrimental growth of brush on the masonry structure, and the need to repair the sluice gate.

Repairing the dam required lowering the water level, creating an opportunity to dredge the heavily sedimented Blow-Me-Down pond. Initial assessments for the dredging projected called for the removal of approximately 8,500 cubic yards of material from a forty foot wide, two-and-a-half-foot deep, 1,200 foot long channel in the middle of the pond (Figure 17). After the pond was drained and work began, it became clear that this level of intervention was inadequate. In response, park management sought other sources of funding, labor, and equipment to complete a more comprehensive dredging project. Despite efforts to involve the Army Corps of Engineers, no additional assistance was offered and the project was completed as initially scoped. Work on the dam proceeded throughout the winter and spring of 1984 (Figure 18). Both the upstream and downstream sides were repaired and new buttress walls and water regulating mechanical equipment were added.

After the 1984 dam rehabilitation and pond dredging, the resources acquired in the Blow-Me-Down Mill property parcel were stabilized. The next steps in maximizing the potential of the property included finding a new use for the mill. One of the first adaptive use proposals included staff housing. National Park Service feasibility studies found that the building was located in the one hundred year flood plain, excluding it from use as housing. Issues related to the placement of the septic system also arose to discourage the project.

A General Management Plan (GMP) for the park was completed in 1996, outlining potential uses and preservation strategies for the building. The GMP echoed earlier determinations about the building being unsuitable for housing due to concerns about flood waters and poor sight distances from the mill parking area onto Route 12A. Alternatively, use as an education center

was proposed. To address issues of accessibility, the possibility of reconstructing the building's missing ell was put forth.

Despite the direction provided in the GMP, no action took place on the mill in the following years. Plans were modified to consider a more collaborative use as a regional center run in conjunction with the Connecticut River Scenic Byway program. However, after consulting with the public in 2000, the park cancelled plans to use the mill for a visitor facility. More recently, the park proposed to use the building as staff offices, but to date, these plans have not been realized and the structure remains empty.

In 2001, the park and a work crew from the Student Conservation Association built a boardwalk and trail segment, approximately 100 feet long, from the Blow-Me-Down trail to the edge of the pond. When it was built, the boardwalk projected approximately 40 feet into the pond, passing over the wetland edge to provide views of the pond and educational opportunities about the park's ecosystems. Today, the terminus of the boardwalk sits fifteen feet from the water's edge that has shifted substantially due to sedimentation.

The park discovered significant deterioration of the Stone Arch Bridge in 2005, as several large stones began to bulge out of the bridge face, threatening the stability of the feature. As an emergency measure, the National Park Service installed timber braces against the west side of the arch of the bridge in the fall of 2005 to prevent collapse of the bridge wall over the winter. Plans and specifications for restoring the structure were completed during the winter of 2005-2006 and the stabilization work occurred in 2006. The stone parapet wall and a large portion of the adjacent retaining wall were also rebuilt.

Blow-Me-Down Mill  
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

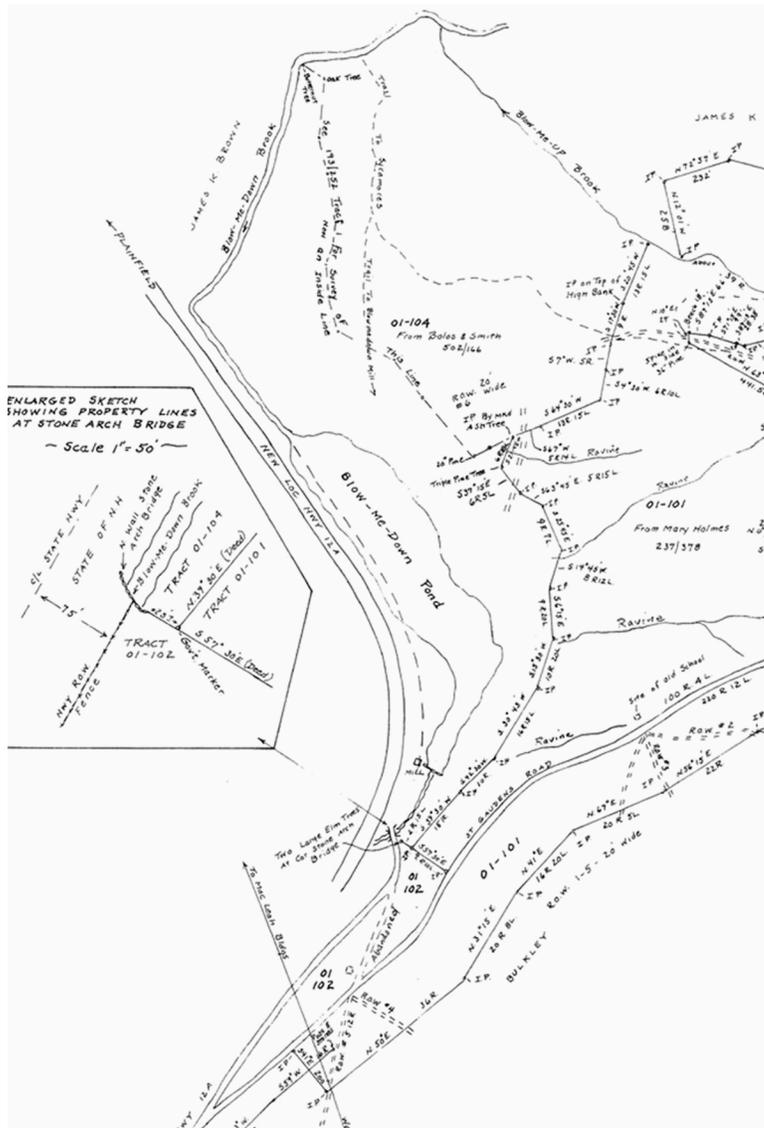


Figure 16. Enlargement of a 1983 plan of Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site. The mill property consists of parcel 01-104. SAGA archives.



*Figure 17. View of drained Blow-Me-Down Pond looking north, 1984. SAGA, 1984 dam rehabilitation file.*



*Figure 18. Blow-Me-Down Mill and dam, looking south, 1984. View of the dam rehabilitation work. SAGA, 1984 dam rehabilitation file.*

## Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

### Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Significant landscape characteristics identified for the Blow-Me-Down Mill landscape include natural systems and features, spatial organization, vegetation, circulation, buildings and structures, constructed water features, and small scale features. The following section of the CLI evaluates the landscape characteristics and features to make a determination about their contributing or non-contributing status. By comparing historic conditions with existing conditions, the CLI has determined that the landscape of Blow-Me-Down Mill retains integrity to the period of significance, 1884-1930.

The landscape of the Blow-Me-Down Mill property is defined by the natural systems and structures that were extant during the period of significance. The mill landscape is set in a ravine northeast of where the Blow-Me-Up and Blow-Me-Down Brooks converge before flowing into the Connecticut River. Steep topography on the east side of the ravine separates the property from the neighboring Aspet landscape, and rolling terrain on the west side of the ravine is home to the Blowmedown Farm. Mature forest vegetation surrounds the site and wetland growth encroaches on the open water of the mill pond. The structures, including the Blow-Me-Down Mill, Stone Arch Bridge, and stone retaining walls, are built from native materials using similar craftsmanship. The setting of the mill, stonework, and pond is especially bucolic as seen from the Stone Arch Bridge.

Since the period of significance, portions of the landscape of the Blow-Me-Down Mill have been altered. Most noticeably, State Route 12A, formerly known as River Road, which runs along the site's western boundary, has been straightened and regraded to allow higher vehicular speeds. The realigned route bypassed the original roadbed of the Stone Arch Bridge. The realignment also resulted in the alteration of some of the pond edge and modification of the front lawn area at the mill building. Vegetation has matured in the surrounding forests and in the upper portion of the pond, where sedimentation has provided the ideal growing conditions for wetland plants, including several species of non-native and invasive plants. The amount of existing open water is much lower than during the historic period.

### INTEGRITY

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its historical identity during the period of significance. The National Register program identified seven aspects of integrity that include: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. To retain integrity, a property must possess the aspects that best convey the sense of a particular time and place.

Two major changes have impacted the integrity of the mill property: the 1957 road straightening project and the sedimentation of the pond. The elevated and widened Route 12A impacted the character of the property due to its altered alignment that encroaches on the historic configuration of the pond and mill landscape. Also, cars now travel at high speeds past the site, increasing noise levels and changing the way people experience the site. Likewise, sedimentation has reduced the overall size of the mill pond, which has drastically altered the character of the pond from its historic condition. Wetland

## Blow-Me-Down Mill

### Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site

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growth, including some woody vegetation, now dominates most of the pond with the exception of a narrow channel of water in the northern region and an area of open water adjacent to the dam.

Despite the altered road corridor and the reduced pond size, the core of the historic property retains its early twentieth-century appearance. The mill property is in its historic location and retains its association with Charles C. Beaman and the Cornish Colony. Due to almost no encroaching development and retention of views to some of the Blowmedown Farm resources, the property's historic setting has been retained. Still present in the historic core of the mill property are the north side of the Stone Arch Bridge, the Blow-Me-Down Mill building and a series of field stone walls that retain their late-nineteenth-century materials and workmanship. However, the mill ell and some of the retaining walls are gone. Blow-Me-Down Trail still skirts the eastern side of the pond before ascending the hill to Aspet. Water pours over the dam, dropping some twenty feet to the stream corridor below, continuing the cascading hum of moving water that has been heard for over 150 years.

#### Location:

The mill, pond, and Stone Arch bridge retain their integrity with respect to location. None of the major features have been moved from their historic locations.

#### Design:

The mill, pond, and Stone Arch Bridge are still extant to exhibit their original design intent. The dry-laid stonework of the mill, retaining walls, and Stone Arch Bridge is still visible today. Each has been altered, either by natural forces or stabilization efforts, yet enough of their historic character remains to clearly convey historic conditions.

#### Setting:

The setting of the mill property is still largely rural, witnessed by the forests that surround the pond and the little interference in the viewshed. Modern Route 12A permits higher vehicular speeds than it did historically and natural succession has occurred allowing some of the surrounding areas to change from field to forest. Yet, overall the historic setting is intact to convey that the area was in a bucolic, rural context, and as such, retains integrity of setting.

#### Materials:

Many character-defining aspects of historic materials remain on the mill property including the stone retaining walls, the Stone Arch Bridge, and the continued presence of surrounding forests. While landscape features such as the pond edge and amount of open water have changed and the dam has been rebuilt, an overall integrity of materials exists to convey historic conditions.

#### Workmanship:

The pond, mill, stone retaining walls, and Stone Arch Bridge are extant and convey integrity to their original craftsmanship. Although they have been altered, historic building techniques, notably the work of masons, can still be evidenced. The Stone Arch Bridge was recently reconstructed by masons who restored more original detailing using documentation provided in historic photographs. The dam has been rebuilt and no longer retains historic integrity. However, the site retains overall integrity of

workmanship due to the high percentage of unaltered, original historic fabric.

**Feeling:**

The presence and integrity of the mill property's existing features and context conveys a feeling representative of the period of significance. The presence of the built features, the surrounding forest, and natural systems are sufficiently intact that a visitor from the period of significance would recognize the property today.

**Association:**

The mill property retains a visible association with Charles C. Beaman and adjacent the Blow-Me-Down Farm (acquired by the National Park Service in 2010), which is visible to the west of Route 12A.

The following section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding List of Classified Structures names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic period (1884-1930), contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is noncontributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource.

**Landscape Characteristic:**

**Natural Systems and Features**

**Historic Condition:**

The Blow-Me-Down Mill property is defined by its dramatic natural systems and features. The use of the property owes its existence to the presence of the Blow-Me-Up Brook and Blow-Me-Down Brook as they join on the north side of the site and pass through a ravine on the way to the Connecticut River. Early settlers dammed the brook and harnessed power from it to support a mill. Charles C. Beaman purchased an existing dam on the brook, rebuilt it, and constructed the Blow-Me-Down Mill to grind grain. The pond collected water from the brook as well as runoff from the steep surrounding hills. During the beginning of the period of significance, much of the surrounding landscape was cleared of trees except along the pond's edge. As the twentieth century progressed, the adjacent land became reforested with the decline of the agricultural economy.

**Existing Conditions:**

The natural systems and features of the property exist largely as they did during the period of significance, with a few alterations. The native woodland surrounding the pond has continued to mature, resulting in the current mixed age coniferous/deciduous forest. Portions of the pond edge were altered after the realignment of Route 12A. With the exception of a small area of open water adjacent to the dam, the mill pond has reverted to wetland.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Blow-Me-Up Brook

Feature Identification Number: 146389

Type of Feature Contribution:           Contributing

Feature:       Blow-Me-Down Brook

Feature Identification Number:       147157

Type of Feature Contribution:           Contributing

**Spatial Organization**

Historic Condition:

During the historic period, the Blow-Me-Down Mill property was situated in a rural context with topography and vegetation defining its spatial organization. The mill pond predated the construction of Beaman’s mill and created an open body of water between the steep hill to the east, which bordered Aspet, and the rolling hill to the west on which Beaman’s Blowmedown Farm resided. In the late 1800s, the construction of the Stone Arch Bridge, the mill, the dam, and the stone retaining wall created a cluster of built structures on the southern end of the property, contrasting with views of rolling terrain cleared of trees for agricultural purposes seen from other areas of the site. Into the twentieth century, farm fields reverted to native woodland, and the amount of open water in the pond slowly decreased due to the effects of sedimentation.

Existing Conditions:

The State of New Hampshire’s road improvements to Route 12A altered the site’s spatial organization in 1927 and again in 1958 by infringing on the mill site, pond, and Stone Arch Bridge. Notably, the 1958 road modifications reduced the size of the pond and straightened the formerly meandering west bank. The mill pond is now largely a wetland with a narrow channel of open water. However, the core relationships of the built elements and their setting in the ravine that leads to the Connecticut River remain intact (Figure 19).

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature:       Bridge and Mill Complex

Feature Identification Number:       146879

Type of Feature Contribution:           Contributing

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Figure 19. View looking north at the Stone Arch Bridge and Blow-Me-Down Mill and Dam. OCLP, 2008.*

### **Vegetation**

#### Historic Condition:

Much of the forest land in Cornish had been cleared for agriculture, firewood, and building materials by the mid-1800s. This is true for the land north of the Blow-Me-Down Pond and Mill at the turn of the century, as seen in historic photographs. However, vegetation grew abundantly along the edges of the pond and the steep hill east of the pond. Because of the decline in agricultural profitability in the late 1800s, large amounts of cleared land began to revert to forest, including the areas surrounding the Blow-Me-Down Mill.

Photographs from the turn of the twentieth century show the pond consisting of a large body of open water with a few wetland plants along the edge. River Road formed the pond's west boundary and steep slopes to Aspet rose along the eastern shore, leaving little shallow water for emergent vegetation to take root. This changed in ensuing decades as silt from the Blow-Me-Down Brook emptied into the pond.

Existing Conditions:

By the 1940s, photographs show vegetation encroaching on the water's edge. The State of New Hampshire straightened Route 12A in 1958, altering the alignment of the historic road and filling segments of Blow-Me-Down Pond. The elbow of land northeast of the mill was outside of the new road alignment and was thereafter maintained as an open field. Currently, the flat, projecting land mass is mowed by the park to restrict the growth of woody vegetation, except on the bank of the pond where several trees grow along the bank, including pines, oaks, and lindens.

Wetland vegetation continued to flourish along the pond after the period of significance. The park dredged a narrow channel in the center of the pond to remove accumulated sediment in the 1980s but did not disturb the perimeter of the pond. Today, much of the formerly open water is dominated by wetland growth (Figure 20). Areas around the pond that were cleared in the late 1800s have rejuvenated and now stand as continuous forest coverage. The north and east sides of the pond are framed by mature forest and the property within the Park's boundary are managed as a natural resource by the National Park Service.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Forest

Feature Identification Number: 146881

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Open field on West Side of Pond

Feature Identification Number: 146883

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Figure 20. View of the mill pond, looking north. Much of the northern portion of the pond is dominated by wetland growth. OCLP, 2008.*

### **Circulation**

#### **Historic Condition:**

The history of River Road, later renamed Route 12A, shaped the land and character of the west side of the property. Prior to the substantial road re-alignment in the 1950s, River Road traveled along the undulating pond bank. When the mill was actively used in the late 1800s and early 1900s, a parking area existed on level ground north of the building. The area served as a pull-off for horses and wagons, and later vehicles that were unloading and loading raw and milled grains.

The State of New Hampshire realigned the River Road in 1927 to smooth the complex ‘S’ curve at the Stone Arch Bridge. The new alignment brought the road closer to the stone retaining wall between the bridge and the mill.

Components of what is now known as Blow-Me-Down Trail began as cart paths through the woods to connect neighboring properties. It is also probable that segments of the trail were the historic route taken by Saint-Gaudens and his assistants when they walked to the pond for winter sports such as ice skating and ice hockey.

#### **Existing Conditions:**

The State of New Hampshire completed road improvements to Route 12A west of the mill in 1958, altering the landscape surrounding the mill, pond, and bridge. Portions of the west bank of the pond were filled in to create a simpler curve for the new roadbed that allowed for higher

vehicular speeds. A guardrail and steep embankment have altered the historic configuration of the front door of the mill that was once located directly on the shoulder of River Road. Vehicular parking currently takes place in an informal gravel area north of the structure (Figure 21). The grass parking area south of the Stone Arch Bridge resulted from the 1958 realignment when the historic roadbed was bypassed entirely. It is neither well defined nor designated as a parking area and is lightly used by hikers to access the trailhead of the Blow-Me-Down Trail (Figure 22).

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Blow-Me-Down Mill Trail  
Feature Identification Number: 146887  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 40890  
LCS Structure Name: Blow-Me-Down Mill Trail  
LCS Structure Number: TR03a

Feature: Field Parking Area South of Bridge  
Feature Identification Number: 146889  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Earth/Gravel Parking Area North of Mill  
Feature Identification Number: 146891  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Figure 21. Gravel parking area at the Blow-Me-Down Mill, looking south. OCLP, 2008.*



*Figure 22. Grass parking area south of the Stone Arch Bridge. The mill can be seen in the background. OCLP, 2008.*



*Figure 23. Blow-Me-Down trail, on the east side of the pond. OCLP, 2008.*



*Figure 24. A segment of the boardwalk that connects the Blow-Me-Down Trail to the mill pond. OCLP, 2008.*

### **Buildings and Structures**

#### Historic Condition:

The Stone Arch Bridge was built across Blow-Me-Down Brook along River Road in 1887-1888. Local stonemason Jaboz Hammond is credited with building much of the structure and later collaborated on the construction of Blow-Me-Down Mill. The bridge was a single arch design, made of dry-laid cut river stone. The State of New Hampshire rebuilt the downstream arch in the 1920s when they straightened the complex curve in the road over the stream. The new bridge opening was made of stone-faced concrete.

Plans for the Blow-Me-Down Mill were begun in 1887 by Joseph M. Wells of the architectural firm McKim, Mead, and White. After Wells' death, architect George F. Babb of the New York City firm, Babb, Cook, and Willard completed the designs. The two-and-a-half-story building was made of local stone and wood and set into the creek bank on the west side of the dam. Of the building's several notable features was the overhanging second story on the west façade that created a large, covered first-floor porch area. The structure was comprised of two rectangular shapes set perpendicularly to one another, one being a single-story ell that projected from the south side of the main building. It functioned as a mill between 1891 and circa 1920.

A wood-frame, one story, shingle-sided Blacksmith Shop was built at the same time as the mill along the top of the retaining wall between the mill and the Stone Arch Bridge. It remained there until the late 1890s when it was moved off site.

The Blow-Me-Down Dam was built concurrently with the mill in 1891 and provided hydropower to grind grains. The original wooden dam was rebuilt using concrete in 1909.

Dry-laid stone retaining walls were built along the west bank of the Blow-Me-Down Brook, downstream from the dam, concurrently with the mill and dam construction in 1891. The portion of the wall closest to the dam became the foundation for the mill ell. Downstream segments retained the earth needed to create a level surface between the River Road and the bridge.

#### Existing Conditions:

The original dam structure was rebuilt using concrete and steel reinforcement in 1934 by William Beaman, Charles's son. Shortly after these repairs were made, the dam washed out in a hurricane and was subsequently rebuilt by the town of Cornish.

In 1957 the state highway department straightened Route 12A further, building another extension on the downstream side of the bridge, made of unfaced reinforced concrete. When completed, the new road almost completely bypassed the old roadbed and Stone Arch Bridge. The area on top of the bridge was surfaced with grass. A rehabilitation project was begun in 2005 to stabilize the loose stones in the bridge's façade (Figure 25). In 2008 the stone parapet

wall and part of the retaining wall were rebuilt and brickwork on the underside of the stone arch was repaired.

In the post-historic period, the mill building deteriorated due to neglect and lack of maintenance. After being used for a brief period as a doctor's office in the 1950s, the building sat vacant, as it does today (Figures 26 and 27). The ell collapsed and was removed in 1968. The park rehabilitated the building in 1984, giving the structure a new roof and new exterior siding. The structure was re-roofed again in 1995.

After decades of deterioration, the park rebuilt the dam in 1984. It was built of cast concrete and rebar and outfitted with modern mechanical equipment to regulate the flow of water. Refinements to the 1984 repairs took place in 1987.

Features in the table below marked with an \* are described on the National Register.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Stone Arch Bridge \*

Feature Identification Number: 146893

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 6539

LCS Structure Name: Blow-Me-Down Stone Arch Bridge

LCS Structure Number: BR01

Feature: Blow-Me-Down Mill \*

Feature Identification Number: 146895

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 6538

LCS Structure Name: Blow-Me-Down Mill

LCS Structure Number: B04

Feature: Blow-Me-Down Dam

Feature Identification Number: 146897

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 40879

LCS Structure Name: Blow-Me-Down Dam

LCS Structure Number: MA01

Feature: Stone Retaining Walls

Feature Identification Number: 146903  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 750423

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Figure 25. The Stone Arch Bridge and Route 12A looking west. OCLP, 2008.*



*Figure 26. The mill building and Route 12A looking south. OCLP, 2008.*



*Figure 27. The stone retaining walls to the left of the mill are the former ell's foundation walls. The dam is pictured in the right foreground. OCLP, 2008.*

### **Constructed Water Features**

#### Historic Condition:

A pond at the site of today's Blow-Me-Down Mill Pond predated Charles C. Beaman's purchase of the property in the 1880s, although the characteristics of the pond are unknown. Beaman replaced the existing dam in 1891 to create the mill pond. Photographs from the turn-of-the-twentieth-century show the new mill pond as a pond bounded by the River Road (Route 12A) on the west and steep hills leading to Aspet on the east. It had an undulating shoreline that filled a large area on the east side of Blowmedown Farm with open water. The appearance of the shallow pond was quickly altered by the growth of wetland vegetation, which took root around the water's edge. This process continued slowly throughout the period of significance from the process of sedimentation.

#### Existing Condition:

Sediment from the surrounding hills continues to wash into the pond, making ideal conditions for wetland vegetation, which has been further exacerbated by the presence of several invasive plant species. Currently, the mill pond is a small body of open water located directly north of the dam. Upstream areas that were historically open, have been filled by wetland growth with the exception of a narrow channel in the center of the pond.

### **Character-defining Features:**

Feature:	Blow-Me-Down Mill Pond
Feature Identification Number:	146925
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	40879
LCS Structure Name:	Blow-Me-Down Dam
LCS Structure Number:	MA01

### **Small Scale Features**

#### Historic Condition:

Few small scale features have been recorded from the historic period at the Blow-Me-Down Mill property. The dam was rebuilt in 1909 with concrete, and it is possible there was a railing at that time, but this has not been determined.

#### Existing Conditions:

According to mid-twentieth century photographs, the pipe rail fence along the concrete retaining wall north of the Mill was in place in 1952, though it may date to 1934 when the dam was rebuilt. The pipe rail fence is a rusted, approximately thirty-six inch high railing with two horizontal bars that serves as a barrier between the mill area and dam (Figure 28). A blue and yellow State of New Hampshire historic marker is located in the informal parking area at the mill. It describes the mill and Charles Beaman's role in the development of the Cornish Colony. A National Park Service laminated fiberglass wayside is located below the dam on the east

bank of the brook. It describes the mill and Charles Beaman's role in the development of the Cornish Colony.

The National Park Service and a work crew from the Student Conservation Association built a boardwalk and trail segment, approximately 100 feet long, from the Blow-Me-Down Trail to the edge of the pond in 2001 (Figure 29). The pressure treated plank boardwalk was raised above the ground using steel pipes driven into the soil. When it was built, the boardwalk projected into the pond, passing over the wetland edge to provide viewing and educational opportunities about the park's ecosystems. Today, the pond has filled in with sediment and the boardwalk no longer reaches the water's edge. A National Park Service laminated fiberglass wayside is located along the boardwalk on the east side of the pond.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Boardwalk

Feature Identification Number: 146927

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Cornish Colony Interpretive Sign

Feature Identification Number: 146929

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Blow-Me-Down Mill Interpretive Sign

Feature Identification Number: 146931

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Boardwalk Interpretive Sign

Feature Identification Number: 146933

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Pipe Rail Fence

Feature Identification Number: 146937

Type of Feature Contribution: Undetermined

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Figure 28. A pipe rail fence stands on top of a concrete retaining wall north of the mill. OCLP, 2008.*



*Figure 29. The boardwalk that formerly extended into the mill pond, and now is surrounded by wetland vegetation. OCLP, 2007.*

## Condition

### Condition Assessment and Impacts

**Condition Assessment:** Fair

**Assessment Date:** 08/04/2010

#### Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Due to the increase in wetland vegetation that has significantly altered the appearance of the pond, the Blow-Me-Down Mill landscape is in fair condition. The site shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values.

### Impacts

**Type of Impact:** Deferred Maintenance

**External or Internal:** Internal

**Impact Description:** Since the property is largely unused, it is a struggle to stay on top of maintenance.

**Type of Impact:** Flooding

**External or Internal:** Internal

**Impact Description:** Unusually high levels of rainwater can impact the structure of the dam.

**Type of Impact:** Release To Succession

**External or Internal:** Internal

**Impact Description:** Wetland vegetation continues to encroach into the mill pond.

## Treatment

## Treatment

**Approved Treatment:** Preservation

**Approved Treatment Document:** General Management Plan

### **Approved Treatment Document Explanatory Narrative:**

The park's 1996 General Management Plan's preferred alternative recommended preservation as the treatment strategy for the Blow-Me-Down Mill property. Rehabilitation is the preferred treatment for most other areas of the park, as manifested in the construction of the visitor center and modification to the Farragut Pavillion at Aspet. The 2009 draft Cultural Landscape follows the spirit of the GMP's rehabilitation zone and recommends rehabilitation as the preferred treatment approach for the Blow-Me-Down Mill based on a review of the significance of the property and its integrity and physical condition. The recommended treatment period is the late 1950s, the time by which the State of New Hampshire had realigned Route 12A. The treatment approach emphasizes the preservation of the historic core of the mill complex and pond setting as well as mitigation actions needed to address the changes to the west side of the property caused by the widened and elevated road bed of Route 12A. Additional key issues to address associated with the mill pond including locating and mitigating sources of sediment within the watershed of the Blow-Me-Down and Blow-Me-Up brooks and dredging the mill pond. Issues associated with vegetation included the need to remove non-native invasive species, restore a healthy wetland and encourage specimen trees that frame the site in a manner similar to the early twentieth century. Issues associated with circulation include the lack of a clearly defined parking area and an easily accessible walking path around the property with clear connections to the existing trail network.

**Approved Treatment Completed:** No

## **Bibliography and Supplemental Information**

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- Year of Publication:** 2009
- Citation Publisher:** Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, National Park Service
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- Citation Title:** Krog, Bronwyn
- Year of Publication:** 1985
- Citation Publisher:** United States Department of the Interior – National Park Service
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- Citation Title:** Mausolf, Lisa
- Year of Publication:** 1998
- Citation Publisher:** New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources
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- Citation Author:** National Register of Historic Places, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site – DRAFT
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