

Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Tract Report of Monitoring, Stewardship, and Road Maintenance  
Endowments RSA 216:8, 9, 10 and 11  
FY 2022

In accordance with RSA 216:8,9 and 11, the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) and New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFG) herewith submits its report to the Speaker of the House, the Senate President, the Governor, the House Clerk, the Senate Clerk, and the State Library for fiscal year 2022.

Connecticut Lake Headwaters Tract Monitoring Endowment. Pursuant to RSA 216:8, the report shall include a: 1) Listing of lands and interests in lands subject to the monitoring provisions of RSA 216:7; 2) Complete a financial accounting of the funds in the monitoring endowment; and 3) Summarize monitoring activities for each property.

*Listing of lands and interests in lands.* The monitoring endowment was established “for the purpose of ensuring a perpetual source of funds to monitor compliance with the terms and condition of the conservation easement interest acquired by the state in the Connecticut Lakes headwater tract.” In accordance with Chapter 148, Laws of 2002, 146,400 acres shall be privately owned subject to a perpetual conservation easement held by the state of New Hampshire under the jurisdiction of DNCR. One hundred acres shall be managed by DNCR as an addition to the Deer Mountain campground.

Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Tract Stewardship Endowment. Pursuant to RSA 216:0, this report shall include a: 1) Listing of all natural area lands within the Connecticut Lakes headwaters tract under joint stewardship; 2) Complete financial accounting of the funds in the stewardship endowment; and 3) Summarize maintenance activities for the road system.

*Listing of natural areas lands under joint stewardship.* The stewardship endowment was established “only for the purposes of habitat and public use management of 25,000 acres of natural areas owned by the state of New Hampshire, and for the purposes of recreation use and the conservation easement management of the 146,400 acres on which the state holds a conservation easement within the Connecticut Lakes headwaters tract.

Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Tract Road Maintenance Endowment. Pursuant to RSA 216:11 this report shall include a: 1) Listing of all roads subject to the maintenance provisions of RSA 216:10; 2) Complete financial accounting of the funds in the maintenance endowment; and 3) Summarize maintenance activities for the road system.

*Listing of roads.* The road maintenance endowment was established “for the purpose of ensuring a perpetual source of funds to maintain the system of roads that exists within the conservation easement and property interests acquired by the state in the Connecticut Lakes headwaters tract.” There are approximately 3,264 ± acres more particularly described as those corridors of land that are generally depicted as the “Designated Roads” that was conveyed to the state under the jurisdiction of DNCR by Deed of Designated Roads and Reservation of Appurtenant Easement executed on October 10, 2003. In addition, the Natural Areas under the jurisdiction of NHFG has 34 miles of main haul and gravel roads and another 31 miles of seasonal roads.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Sarah Stewart, Commissioner  
Dept. of Natural and Cultural Resources

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Scott Mason, Executive Director  
NH Fish and Game Department

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

**Road Maintenance Endowment RSA 216:10-II**

Funds added to the Road Maintenance Endowment pursuant to paragraph I shall be used to support road maintenance under the authority of state agencies within the conservation easement and property interests acquired in the Connecticut Lakes headwaters tract. The Stewardship Endowment has been approved by the NH Department of Justice to be used for maintenance of the road system to support public access on the property. In the future, accounting will be more precise on what projects were supported by which fund. The projects below were paid for by a combination of Road and Stewardship Endowment monies and landowner contribution.

The Division of Parks and Recreation Bureau of Park Operations, Great North Wood Region and Bureau of Trails, District 1 staff accomplished the following projects in FY2022 (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022) to support of the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Working Forest.

Grading and Raking:

47 miles of road was raked and graded, taking 7-8 passes per mile. The Bureau of Trails graded 2 miles of OHRV Corridor A in the Deadwater Area with operating budget funds.

Culverts:

A total of 110+ culverts were installed on the property for rehabilitation and on-going maintenance. The culverts were purchased through State Contract. On hand inventory of 30 pipes that will be used for spring opening and general maintenance as needed.

New Construction:

Bridge Material on site for Deadwater Loop Road bridge at 2 mile marker. DES permit received and work was completed in October 2022.

Road Rehabilitation, Ditch maintenance and Repair:

Through outside contractors and our staff, 21 miles of ditch lines was maintained. Rehab of roads continued on Cedar Stream and Magalloway Road, with ditching, culvert replacement and some gravel was used. Carr Ridge, Perry Stream and sections Big Brook were reshaped with ditch maintenance and culvert work.

Mowing:

Staff operated the tractor and boom mower for 340 hours. 29 miles of roadside bush hogging took place during the season. Areas of Perry Stream, Big Brook, Cedar Stream, Buckhorn. The equipment can handle up to 8" diameter trees and shrubs.

Bridge Repair:

No repairs.

Signage:

Continued maintenance and replacement of damage signs and post will continue on an as needed basis. Replacements will be installed during the 2022 summer season.

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Friends Groups:

Ongoing coordination with the following volunteer and friends' groups.

- Cohos Trail
- Great North Woods Riders
- Pittsburg Ridge Runners
- Colebrook Ski Bees
- Swift Diamond Riders

Comments & projected projects:

1. *Primary roads:* Until more funding is available crushed gravel will be on hold other than for new culvert replacement.
2. *Secondary & Tertiary Roads:* DNCR and the landowner meet twice a year to identify work to be done on the roads. This plans frequently changes because of forestry contractor availability and markets.
3. *Road work to be performed in FY2023:* Rub rails on the Last Deer Camp Road Bridge will be changed this spring/summer. Round Top Bridge will also get new rub rails and runners in the summer 2023. Planning and permitting will start in the summer of 2023 to replace The West Branch of Indian Stream (Terrill Pond).
4. *Ditch Work - Rehab:* Most of this work revolves around the Summer/Winter Forest and Recreation needs for upcoming season. Continuation of Magalloway Road, Cedar Stream Road and Perry Stream. The Trails Bureau will be working on the East Inlet Area.
5. *Grading & Raking:* We are falling behind due to budget, heavy grass, poor gravel surfaces, culvert replacement. Planned grading in summer 2023 include most used Primary Roads and some secondary roads.
6. *Mowing:* The following roads are scheduled to be mowed in 2023 including Haystack and Indian Stream Area approximately 35 miles.
7. *Gravel:* Will be using gravel from the Emery Allen pit for road maintained on Magalloway and Smith Brook. Purchase gravel for culverts. Perry Stream from the 2.3 mm to the 9 mm.
8. *Culverts:* Purchase culverts for replacement on all designated roads. A limited number of pipes on hand for general maintenance.
9. *Bridge Work:* Redecking and rub rails as needed.
10. *Mile marker signs/post:* More signs and post will be purchased & installed for new logging operations information and safety per REC Plan and Road Maintenance Plan. Signs will be ordered for East Inlet and Magalloway Road.
11. *GNW Maintenance Facility:* The facility supports the CLHWF property management and is the storage area for materials and equipment. This facility still lacks water/septic service.
12. *Equipment & Equipment Rentals:* A pickup will be ordered upon budget approval to be used on roads and support vehicle for mower operations. Rentals are planned for grading, road rehab, culvert replacement and bridge work.

**Stewardship Endowment RSA 216:9-II**

The stewardship endowment shall be maintained in perpetuity and shall be utilized jointly by the executive director of the Fish and Game Department and the commissioner of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources only for the purposes of habitat and public use management of 25,000 acres of natural areas owned by the state of New Hampshire, and for the purposes of recreation, use, and the conservation easement management of the 146,400 acres on which the state shall hold a conservation easement within the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters tract.

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The Stewardship Endowment has been approved by the NH Department of Justice to be used for maintenance of the road system to support public access on the property. These projects are included in the road endowment section. The Stewardship Endowment also supported the tractor payments, road work on Cedar Stream, Perry Stream and Magalloway roads, and staff who work on the property maintaining parking lots, pit toilets, roads and trails.

**Monitoring Endowment RSA 216:7-II**

Funds added to the monitoring endowment shall be used to support monitoring by state agencies, local municipalities, and qualifying nonprofit corporations of conservation easement interests acquired in the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters tract. Such monitoring shall be to ensure that the tract will be managed according to the legal agreements embodied within the conservation easement, which is recorded in its entirety in the Coos county registry of deeds.

During FY 2022, the north region Forests and Lands Forest Management staff spent approximately 65 hours on easement monitoring throughout the fiscal year. This includes on the ground monitoring looking at active harvests as well as overall property supervision. The foresters also check on the property while in the area looking at state land or other easements.

Additionally, Margaret Machinist spent over 25 hours participating in calls, meetings and writing reports. During the course of the year, there are also additional hours spent on easement questions that arise which need interpretation. All leased camp proposals and modifications are reviewed and approved by the Regional Forester. Staff reviews the annual operation plan as well as collaborates with NH Fish and Game on the SMA management.

The NH Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) spent 104 hours working on the property, completing surveys and report writing in FY 2022. NHB conducts surveys of rare plants, and exemplary natural communities as well as general botany identification.

The Concord staff is also involved with decision making as questions arise with the interpretation of the easement, and each year they spend time helping to administer the easement as well. This year, Concord staff spent approximately 64 hours on meetings, easement interpretation, correspondence, stewardship plan review and other items throughout the year.

NH Forest Rangers spend time throughout the year on the property conducting timber inspections, wildlife detection and suppression as well as recreation law enforcement, and assist with border security. NH Forests and Lands maintains the Magalloway Fire Tower, which aids during high fire danger times of the spring and summer.

Forests and Lands also provided technical assistance to the NH Fish and Game department on the CT Lakes Natural Area; assisting them in planning and inventory for forest management activities on the property. An additional 42 hours was spent with Fish and Game working on the Natural Area.

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**FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT**

Endowment funds are added to Fish and Game's Habitat Program Budget consistent with Legislative intent and commensurate with estimated project costs relating to Connecticut Lakes Headwaters property including the NHFG owned Connecticut Lakes Natural Area (CLNA). Revenue included in the Habitat Program budget principally includes dedicated habitat stamp revenue derived from hunting license purchases, and federal grant revenue from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration federal aid program. The Habitat Program budget covers expenditures related to Connecticut Lakes Headwaters properties as well as statewide habitat program costs. The Department utilizes the endowment funding as match, or to supplement funding needs for specific projects. In FY22 the Department added \$39,995.00 of endowment funds into the Habitat Program budget to help cover CLNA related project expenses.

**MONITORING ENDOWMENT RSA 216:7-II**

Funds added to the monitoring endowment shall be used to support monitoring by state agencies, local municipalities, and qualifying nonprofit corporations of conservation easement interests acquired in the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters tract. Such monitoring shall be to ensure that the tract will be managed according to the legal agreements embodied within the conservation easement, which is recorded in its entirety in the Coos county registry of deeds.

Fish and Game Department

During FY 2022, NHFG regional and administrative staff continued to participate on the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Citizens Advisory Committee, Recreation subcommittee, attend annual landowner and manager meetings and provide input on a range of easement associated issues. Each year the Annual Operation Plan for Connecticut Lakes Timber Company (CLTC) is reviewed by regional biological staff.

In cooperation with the NH Division of Forests and Lands, the holder of the conservation easement, Fish and Game biologists monitor timber harvests and other habitat associated projects. During this period, 39 timber harvests totaling 11,544 acres were reviewed on paper and mapping software using the provided harvest maps and plans. On-the-ground technical assistance was provided to forest managers regarding harvests occurring within 10 special management areas (SMA) totaling 911 acres.

On-the-ground harvest review included 6 historic deer wintering areas totaling 686 acres with focuses on maintaining functional winter cover and perpetuating future softwood regeneration; two riparian wildlife corridors totaling 75 acres that focus on maintaining connectivity throughout the landscape; one 100 acre beech mast stand where protecting and promoting beech for its important mast benefits was the main goal; and one harvest that included 50 acres of wildlife travel corridor ensuring cover for movement that spans from the river valleys to the height of land.

Beyond reviewing harvests within SMA boundaries the regional biologist also assisted foresters in review of a proposed hiking trail that traveled through multiple riparian wildlife corridors. Ultimately, several diversions were made to the trail to minimize human impact of sensitive wetland areas. Lastly, NHFG biologists participated in two field tours of active timber harvest on the property as under annual monitoring activities. These reviews occur once in the summer and winter to gain insight into the daily operations of the managing forestry company.

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Every year Department staff also conducts general wildlife monitoring duties on the property including five ruffed grouse surveys, two woodcock surveys, three waterfowl surveys, one day of waterfowl duck box maintenance and three days assessing beech and soft mast production. In addition, law enforcement provides a consistent presence on the property.

**ROAD MAINTENANCE ENDOWMENT RSA 216:10-II**

Funds added to the road maintenance endowment pursuant to paragraph I shall be used to support road maintenance under the authority of state agencies within the conservation easement and property interests acquired in the Connecticut Lakes headwaters tract. The expenses below were paid for by a combination of endowment monies and NHFG contributions.

Fish and Game Department

NHFG monitors and manages road conditions in the CLNA on an on-going basis. All roads are inspected annually to assess condition and identify spots needing repair.

During FY 2022 road maintenance included rebuilding ~2 miles of road off of East Inlet that serves as the primary snowmobile connector to the south. The road was re-ditched, shaped and graveled. To accommodate the gravel needs for this project and future projects on the CLNA ~6000 yards of gravel was crushed and is stored in the Scott Bog pit. Lastly, annual roadside mowing was completed on four miles of East Inlet and the entire winter road system in the South Bay Bog Operating Unit.

Road work on the CLNA is partially paid for through the Habitat Program budget and endowment fund revenue.

**STEWARDSHIP ENDOWMENT RSA 216:9-II**

The stewardship endowment shall be maintained in perpetuity and shall be utilized jointly by the executive director of the fish and game department and the commissioner of the department of natural and cultural resources only for the purposes of habitat and public use management of 25,000 acres of natural areas owned by the state of New Hampshire, and for the purposes of recreation, use, and the conservation easement management of the 146,400 acres on which the state shall hold a conservation easement within the Connecticut Lakes headwaters tract.

Fish and Game Department

*CLNA vegetative inventory*

During FY 2022 NHFG developed a request for proposals to design and implement an update the vegetative inventory, to redo the forest stand typing and establish a carbon baseline on the CLNA. Entire projected project costs, depending on final sampling design, is expected to be >\$175,000.00. Endowment funds will provide the core of the funding for this project. In FY23 a proposal will be selected with field work to being in the summer of 2023.

*Commercial Habitat Management*

During FY 2022, NHFG staff identified the area and trees to be cut off of the Carr Ridge Road network in the South Bay Bog portion of the CLNA. Approximately 120 acres will be treated with selective cutting and 6.3 acres with clear cuts to promote young forest habitat. Project completion is projected for the winter of 2022/2023.

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*Invasive Plant Species*

NHFG continues to be involved in the identification and treatment of invasive plants throughout the entire CLHT (CLTC as well as CLNA). This work is done through a group focused on the entire upper portion of the Connecticut River watershed referred to as The Upper Connecticut Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (UC CISMA). During this period, the UC CISMA coordinated the chemical treatment of knotweed and phragmites populations on both properties. In addition, multiple sites surrounding the CLHT were treated to prevent spread onto CLTC and the CLNA.

~END~