



Monadnock State Park



Chapter 5: Guiding Principles for Implementation

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE SCORP AND LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION

Connection to America's Great Outdoors Priorities

A 2011 National Association of Recreation Resource Planners (NARRP) report, *Reframing the Role and Relevancy of SCORP Plans for the Next 50 Years*, suggests examples of connections to America's Great Outdoors priorities (a 2011 White House Report on protecting our lands and waters and connecting all Americans to their natural and cultural heritage). These include developing urban parks and community green spaces; landscape-scale conservation; recreational blueways; children, youth, and special populations; connections of local, state and federal outdoor recreation assets; community collaboration, multi-agency cooperation; improved public access; natural and cultural resource conservation; special designations (e.g., scenic byways, heritage areas, national trails); wildlife corridors and habitat protection; linkages to healthcare, K-12 education, transportation, economic development, and tourism industries; identification of priority state and federal land acquisition needs; use of spatial analysis tools for recreation supply and gap analysis.

America's Great Outdoors Vision Statement - All children, regardless of where they live, have access to clean, safe outdoor places within a short walk of their homes or schools, where they can play, dream, discover, and recreate.

Americans participate in the shared responsibility to protect and care for our unique natural and cultural heritage for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

Rural lands - our working farms, ranches, and forests - are conserved and restored through incentives and local partnerships.

Our national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, and other public lands and waters are managed with a renewed commitment to sound stewardship and resilience.

Our natural areas and waterways, whether publicly or privately owned, are reconnected, healthy, and resilient and support both human needs and the wildlife that depend on them.

Communities work together to restore and protect healthy rivers and lakes to provide recreational opportunities and to contribute significantly to a vibrant economy.

Funding

Support for state and federal funding for outdoor recreation land acquisition, development, rehabilitation, operations, and maintenance can be justified through accountability for implementing actions and systematic data collection demonstrating the economic, social, and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation activities, parks, and facilities.

While New Hampshire's state parks received the first system-wide capital investment in four decades of \$6 million in fiscal year 2008 from the New Hampshire State Legislature, and approximately \$16.95 million between 2008 and 2013 for improvements to Hampton Beach, North Beach Seawall, and North Hampton Beach Bathhouse, and approximately \$2.7 million for repairs to parks statewide, existing state and federal funding levels are not sufficient to address New Hampshire's long-term outdoor recreation needs. *Figure 14* shows community locations of LWCF projects in New Hampshire from 2006 to 2011 that were funded, not funded, or applications were withdrawn.



Franconia Notch State Park

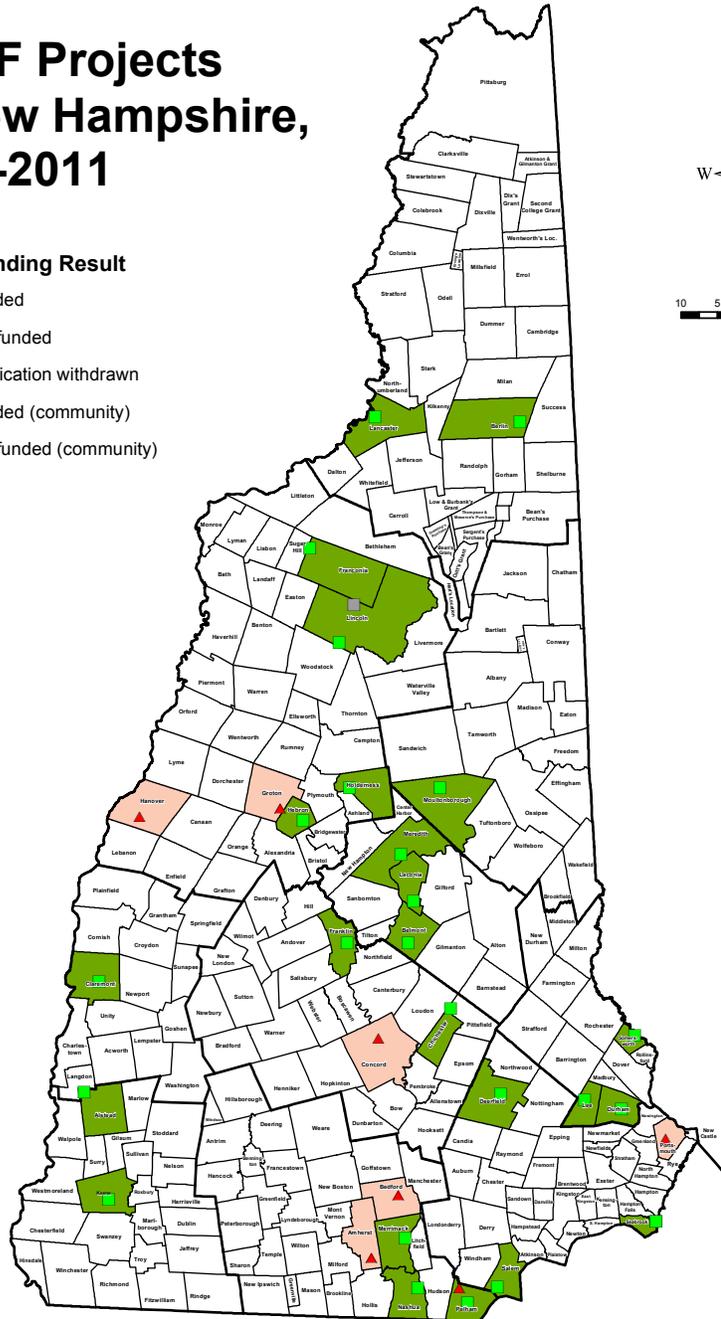
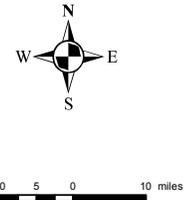
FIGURE 14:

LWCF Projects in New Hampshire, 2006-2011

LWCF Projects in New Hampshire, 2006-2011

Project Funding Result

- Funded
- ▲ Not funded
- Application withdrawn
- Funded (community)
- Not funded (community)



Map produced at NH Office of Energy and Planning, July 31, 2012.



Alignment with SCORP Priorities, Goals, and Actions

The 2013-2018 SCORP must be completed for New Hampshire to be eligible for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grant funding. The allocation of funds to communities is conducted through a statewide application process. Project applicants are required to demonstrate a link between the proposed project and the analysis of New Hampshire’s outdoor recreation supply, demand, and needs contained in the SCORP and should be in alignment with the priorities (Chapter 3), goals, and actions (Chapter 4) expressed in the public involvement process.

The following priorities, goals, and actions have a direct correlation to the LWCF funding process, and will be used to develop criteria for scoring applications and ultimately making grant awards.



Outreach to Rural Areas/Smaller Towns

The obesity epidemic and healthy aging are critical issues facing New Hampshire citizens. Smaller local projects, trail connections, fishing ponds and river access, restrooms, trailheads, and looped park trails may provide the largest community reach and provide additional opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles. State agencies can help by marketing the availability and status of the Land and Water Conservation Funds for projects, and providing technical assistance to communities in obtaining match-funding resources.

Sustainable Communities

In 2011, a three-year \$50,000 grant made by the Healthy New Hampshire Foundation to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) was used to leverage a \$3.37 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The program encourages grantees to work together to create employment and economic opportunities by integrating housing, land-use, workforce, transportation, and infrastructure development.

Healthy Eating Active Living

The Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Campaign will provide technical assistance to the state's regional planning commissions to incorporate the recommended interventions outlined in the HEAL NH Action Plan, specifically the section addressing Communities and Municipalities. Examples of incorporating the plan's concepts of the built environment to create healthy communities include accessible sidewalks, traffic calming techniques, and safe parks. The three-year project will create a template by which the state's nine Regional Planning Commissions can identify local issues while coordinating technical expertise and public outreach. New Hampshire SCORP priorities positively align with the goals of the HUD grant initiative, creating potential for collaborative funding of parks and active transportation initiatives (trails, greenways), education programming and community outreach.



Ellacoya State Park

Volunteers as Conservation Partners - In 2011, Ammy Heiser of Pembroke, led the process to conserve the Hillman property, a 44-acre working farm along the Suncook River. As Chair of the Pembroke Conservation Commission, she thoroughly researched the parcel and found that its soils were of statewide agricultural importance. She then worked with the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission to develop an Open Space plan, discovering in the process that the property was also of significant environmental, historical, and cultural value.

Heiser's efforts to obtain an award of a Federal Farm and Ranch Land Protection grant and raise \$300,000 in matching funds enabled the acquisition of the property and the purchase of a permanent conservation easement.

"In the end, her tenacity won out, with an overwhelming show of support at Town Meeting," said Robert S.S. Blake, Fish, and Game Commissioner for Strafford County and chair of the Commission's Awards of Excellence program. "As a result, there is permanent protection of a working farm with many other conservation values, including a significant riparian buffer on the Suncook River and public access for fishing, as well as forest, field and aquatic habitat protection."

Technical Planning Assistance

As recommended in the National Association of Recreation Resource Planners (NARRP) report, *Reframing the Role and Relevancy of SCORP Plans for the Next 50 Years*, technical planning assistance is necessary for states and communities to fully benefit from statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation planning.

Technical Assistance Options for SCORP Efforts

- National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
- USDA Cooperative Extension Service
- State and Private Forestry, U.S. Forest Service
- Professional Outsourcing

Accountability for Implementation

A commitment to providing annual progress reports available to the public on implementing New Hampshire SCORP Priorities and Actions is essential.

Wetlands and SCORP

Section 303 of the Federal Emergency Wetlands Act requires that the SCORP address wetlands as an important outdoor recreation resource and that protection priorities be established. The priorities established in this SCORP satisfy that requirement.

Wetlands and Wildlife - The correlation between wetlands preservation and wildlife conservation is important to understand. Landscape connectivity that supports critical features of wildlife migration, including foraging and colonization, help maintain ecological connectivity and wildlife diversity.

Overview of New Hampshire's Wetlands

New Hampshire is blessed with numerous lakes, ponds, and rivers, as well as valuable groundwater. Wetlands provide a wide variety of benefits including maintaining clean water supplies, enhancing water quality, controlling floodwaters, erosion control, and providing recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities. The environmental savings related to clean water can be measured in terms of water pollution reduction, stormwater treatment cost reduction through rainfall retention. Measures to control invasive species, plant kills, and allergy blooms are important for the continued safe use and enjoyment of water based recreation and for maintaining sustainable rivers, lakes, and ponds.

With an understanding of how recreational use and the number of visitors can affect watershed resources, community planners can make responsible choices for locating recreation activities and facilities. Once a recreation site is created, long-term maintenance is essential for maintaining landscape health as well as continued user satisfaction. In some instances, volunteer maintenance may be able to pick up where public funding ends in determining resource capacity limitations. Watershed groups, whose efforts focus on education, monitoring, and rehabilitation, can also serve as a bridge between the public agencies and volunteer maintenance groups.

Wetlands Protection

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, Water Division conducts a variety of programs designed to ensure the protection of New Hampshire's waters with guidance from the New Hampshire Water Council, and the New Hampshire Wetlands Council.

Public water supplies are protected by overseeing the operation of about 125 municipal systems, 500 residential systems (condominiums, apartment buildings, and mobile home parks), and over 1,100 systems that provide water for restaurants, motels, and campgrounds. Consistent with criteria of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, the Water Division conducts engineering reviews of all proposals to develop or expand public water supplies. Additionally, it conducts regular water quality sampling, water facility inspections, facility operator licensing and educational programs, and technical assistance. It also administers a source water protection program that includes a grant program for protecting lands surrounding water supplies.

DES protects the state's surface water through its active lakes and rivers monitoring programs and its biological and chemical analyses of rivers and water bodies. During the year, DES conducts thousands of water analyses on state waters, including those involving drinking water and industrial and municipal wastewater effluents. The Water Division also oversees lake and river volunteer monitoring programs, a public beach and swimming pool inspection program, and an acid rain monitoring program.

New Hampshire Wetlands Inventory and Regional Data

The estimated acreage of wetlands in New Hampshire ranges between 290,000 acres, estimated from the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and 576,386 acres, estimated from soil surveys by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Tiner, 2007). Accordingly, wetlands occupy between five and ten percent of New Hampshire's landscape. An analysis of aerial photography by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services indicates that there are approximately 7,500 acres of tidal wetlands, with the vast majority of New Hampshire's wetlands being nontidal (NHDES, 2002).

Figure 15 shows the distribution of wetlands throughout the state.

FIGURE 15:

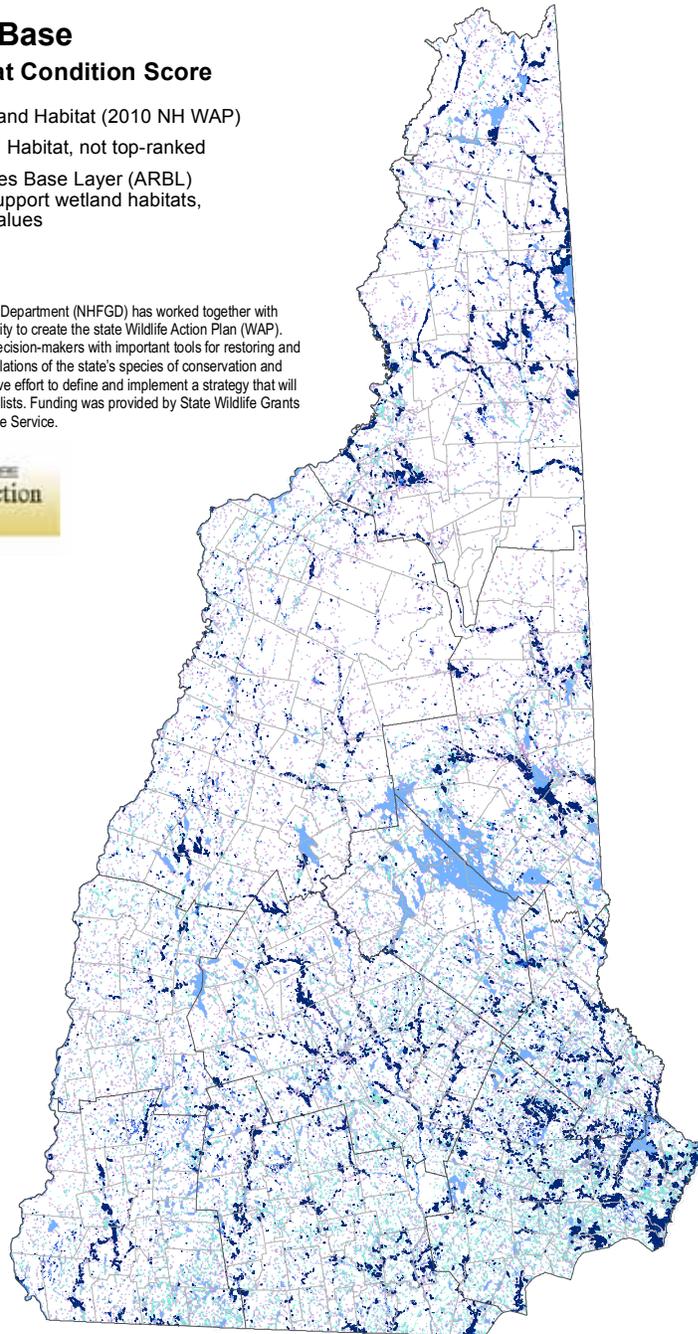
New Hampshire's Wetlands Base

NH Wetlands Base

by Relative Habitat Condition Score

-  Top-ranked Wetland Habitat (2010 NH WAP)
-  Mapped Wetland Habitat, not top-ranked
-  Aquatic Resources Base Layer (ARBL) areas likely to support wetland habitats, functions, and values
-  Surface Water

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department (NHFGD) has worked together with partners in the conservation community to create the state Wildlife Action Plan (WAP). The plan provides New Hampshire decision-makers with important tools for restoring and maintaining critical habitats and populations of the state's species of conservation and management concern. It is a pro-active effort to define and implement a strategy that will help keep species off of rare species lists. Funding was provided by State Wildlife Grants administered by the US Fish & Wildlife Service.



Economics of the Loss of Wetlands

Overall, perceived degradation to water clarity and purity will result in the greatest economic loss to New Hampshire. Perceived declines in water clarity and purity would result in about \$51 million of lost sales, \$18 million in lost income, and more than 800 lost jobs statewide. Upwards of 220 acres of wetlands has been restored or enhanced, and more than 12,500 acres of upland buffers have been preserved through the Aquatic Resources Mitigation program (NH R.S.A. 482-A:28-33).

Environmentally Based Outcomes

- Wetland complexes of high ecological function and value are afforded adequate protection.
- Blocks of unfragmented habitat are protected and/or connected to other habitats, protected land, or stream and wildlife corridors.
- Land development practices avoid and minimize cumulative and indirect impacts to wetland and aquatic resources.
- Natural stream flow regimes are maintained, and stream crossings allow aquatic resources to stay connected.

New Hampshire's Wetland Program Plan

According to the NH Department of Environmental Services 2011-2017 Wetlands Program Plan, New Hampshire's tidal and non-tidal wetlands are of great importance for flood control, water filtration, water storage, and recharge for both groundwater and surface waters. Wetlands also support the food chain, providing food and shelter for a variety of aquatic and upland plants and animals. Although New Hampshire has lost fewer wetlands to filling and dredging than many coastal states, landscape change poses a significant challenge to the protection of New Hampshire's wetlands. Given the important functions and values of wetlands, there have been a number of attempts to place an economic value on wetlands resources. For instance, a 2006 EPA funded study estimated that the economic benefits generated by a single acre of wetland amounts to \$150,000 to \$200,000 (NACO, 2006). The same study found that wetlands increase surrounding real estate values by an estimated 28 percent while enhancing the quality of life. In 2002 a study by the Clean Water Network estimated the economic value of New Hampshire's remaining wetlands to be approximately \$1.2 billion (CWN, 2002).



Greenfield State Park

DES has identified the following “desired outcomes” related to wetland resources in the state. These outcomes are separated into environmentally based outcomes and programmatic based outcomes and are the two cornerstones that were used to guide the work to be accomplished under the Plan.

Programmatic-Based Outcomes

- Wetland permit processes will be integrated with other land resources permits.
- Wetland protection efforts will be well funded and wetland resources will be protected and maintained to provide improved ecosystem services (reduce flooding, improve water quality, provide habitat and recreation opportunities) and the economic benefits they provide.
- Development of a broad base of stewardship and public understanding of the multiple benefits of the functions and values of wetlands and aquatic resources.
- Wetland compliance and enforcement efforts are adequately funded, and actions are consistent and responsive.
- Wetland condition is assessed on a regular basis as part of NH Water Quality Monitoring Strategy and 305(b) reporting.
- Environmentally-based outcomes and measures are used for annual status and trends reporting and to influence proposed regulation, policy, and decision-making.
- Resource management decisions are based on sound science and balance competing interests.

IMPLEMENTING THE 2013-2018 NEW HAMPSHIRE SCORP

The 2013-2018 New Hampshire SCORP provides a five year framework that will assist in addressing priority outdoor recreation issues and influences. The plan was developed and based on research of impacting trends, supply, usage patterns, and expressed demand that included the analysis of outdoor recreation issues and needs collected through the public outreach process. The plan includes priorities, goals, and supporting actions that will assist in addressing outdoor recreation issues and needs within the State of New Hampshire.

Implementation of the SCORP will require and benefit from coordinated efforts and collaboration between federal, state, and local government agencies, outdoor recreation providers, non-profit interest groups, private industry, and policy makers. The intent of this plan is to guide and prioritize recreation planning that is thoughtful in design, consistent in purpose, and coordinated in effort among the diverse outdoor recreation entities throughout the State of New Hampshire. Also important to implementation of the SCORP within the next five years will be the efforts put forth to ensure accountability in measuring success. Publicly issued annual reports will provide a benchmark of progress for the identified goals and actions within the identified priorities.



Mount Sunapee State Park

To effectively implement the priorities, goals, and actions identified in the 2013-2018 New Hampshire SCORP, improving collaboration among state agencies, cities and towns, businesses, and non-profit recreation providers throughout the state is essential. Toward this end, the following initiatives have been identified by the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development.

- Educate communities and governing bodies on the value of the SCORP and the LWCF including Select Boards, Conservation Commissions, and Planning Boards.
- Distribute the SCORP to libraries, municipalities, government officials, and legislators.
- Conduct regional outreach meetings with municipal parks and recreation agencies and local recreation leaders to discuss the LWCF program and its requirements.
- Revise grant program criteria to reflect the priorities, goals, and actions of the 2013-2018 SCORP.
- Convene a meeting with the Open Project Selection Process Committee (OPSP) to finalize project selection criteria and grant round timetable.
- Develop an implementation matrix for measurement of SCORP progress over the next five years.

As planning and progress for outdoor recreation is an ongoing effort, it will be important to continue active participation among the Office of Energy and Planning, the Department of Resources and Economic Development, the SCORP Advisory Work Group, and the Open Project Selection Process Committee to ensure its success.

The 2013-2018 New Hampshire SCORP provides guidance to accomplish goals and provides direction for local and state agencies, communities, and partners to enhance the outdoor experience for New Hampshire's residents and visitors, while supporting the state's economic vitality and natural resources.

New Hampshire State Parks Engage Families

“We joined the Great Park Pursuit this year at the urging of a friend, but we were not prepared for what happened to us: after spending most of the last five years close to our home in Manchester we discovered what a wealth of unforgettable activities and experiences were available to us through the New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation! The Great Park Pursuit provided just the framework for us to take the plunge and throw ourselves into exploring the New Hampshire wilderness. Our three children (ages 5, 9, and 10) each took something memorable from the various Great Park Pursuit events and activities, and day treks are now a part of our monthly diet! Thank you, Great Park Pursuit, for inspiring us to get out and experience what a special state we live in. We can’t wait to participate again next year!”

- *Team Barber Style*



Odiorne Point State Park